

Maxwell Grant

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CRY SHADOW!

From the smart art galleries of New York's 57th Street to the rugged beauty of Martha's Vineyard, Lamont Cranston pursues an enemy and almost loses a life..



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Morris Kitt battled the cloud covering his mind. “No,” he croaked. “No.”

The eyes of The Shadow bored into the man.

Morris Kitt fought against the cloud that pressed down and down, blotting out his brain, destroying his will, until he could no longer remember why he should not do what the mysterious black figure asked.

“I . . . I . . . Yes, all right, I’ll tell you who . . .”

The sound was no more than a faint hiss in the dark room. A short, sharp rush of air, a click, and nothing more.

Morris Kitt fell dead without a sound.

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CRY SHADOW!
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1

GREAT CITIES have a life of their own.

New York is a city that never rests. At any hour, by day or by night, the streets of the city are quick and restless. In the day the noise and movement blend into a crescendo of constant motion that boils and surges through the wide streets and the narrow streets—a river of humanity that is never still. From dawn to dusk the city dances in the light of day to its own massive and swirling music.

At night the city slows, but it does not stop—the river runs on, quieter but deeper and darker. On the night streets of the city, the dark and hidden side streets or the wide avenues bright with neon, there are always the shadows of men moving. Some move openly and with the echo of the vanished noise of the day. Others move quickly, without sound. Behind the now silent facades of the buildings there is a clandestine world of footsteps that echo through deserted corridors and in abandoned rooms while the city of the day sleeps on in imagined peace.

Fifty-Seventh Street is one of the wide streets. All night there are neon lights and people walking. It is a busy street in the heart of Manhattan, and there is no hour when the traffic does not move along its length. In the day it is a street of music and foreign tea rooms. Along its length all things exist from the slums of Hell's Kitchen to the rich East Side streets of the exclusive and wealthy. The river is not far away from Fifty-Seventh Street near First Avenue and between the avenue and the river are the small rich and hidden streets.

Queenstanding Place is one of the small, rich and elegant streets off Fifty-Seventh Street near the river. It is a street of art galleries. The private art galleries where the rich come to buy culture and a measure of immortality. The galleries line both sides of the street. Some are on the street level and have windows like shops where paintings are displayed to entice

buyers to enter. Others are above on the second and third floors and are identified only by polished brass plates at the street entrances below. There are galleries above galleries; galleries next to galleries; and galleries facing galleries across the quiet street.

At night the galleries are dark and empty, the paintings and sculpture hidden in darkness and waiting for the morning to be seen again. Unless there is an opening of a new show. A party to honor a new artist, a gathering by invitation to launch a new name into the world of art. At an opening a gallery will blaze with light and noise far into the night beyond its normal time to be dark and silent. The guests, and the critics, and the rival painters, and the simply curious will crowd into the festive gallery where the opening is being held.

On this warm summer night, at a time just before midnight, the gallery that blazed with final light before the party ended was the Adrian Gallery. The Pauli Gallery, at the other end of the block, was dark and deserted. Close on First Avenue the traffic still moved, and people passed in the heat, but inside the dark rooms of the Pauli Gallery on the street level all was silent and still. Nothing had moved inside the many rooms of the Pauli Gallery for many hours. Nothing moved in the dark and silent Pauli Gallery until just before midnight.

There was a faint sound at the rear door of the gallery. The sound was a quick rasp of metal and then a faint clicking. Footsteps moved stealthily through the corridors and rooms of the gallery. The sound of the footfalls moved deliberately from room to room in a straight line, without hesitation or false turns, as if whoever were now in the gallery knew exactly where they were going.

The two men stepped into one of the smaller rooms where the thick curtains hid the windows. It was a room of glass cases that covered small statues of dull-colored stone or clay.

The two men were only vague and indistinct outlines in the dark room. They did not pause as they entered the room, but moved directly to a glass case that stood near the center of the room beneath a skylight that let the light of the moon into the room. They made no sound, and moved not together but one behind the other. The man in front, obviously the leader, stepped up to the glass case near the center of the room. He raised his arm and let it fall.

There was a loud shattering of glass.

His hands shaking, and breathing heavily now, the first man reached quickly into the case and withdrew a small, squat statue. The second man stepped forward with a small bag held open. The first man carefully dropped the statue into the bag. The second man swiftly closed the bag. Both men turned and started for the door.

Suddenly, the two men froze in their tracks.

A wierd, mocking laugh echoed through the small room like a chilling wail of the unknown.

2

THE MACABRE laugh rang out again, reverberating among the glass cases of the room, filling the darkness and the silence. An unseen voice spoke from nowhere.

"Do not look for escape," the voice said, mocking and yet cold and hard. "There is no escape."

The second of the two men, the one who had not shattered the glass case, had taken two steps toward the door. Now this man stopped, his mouth open, a thick fear deep in his eyes. He stared straight ahead into the gloom of the dark room, his eyes staring as if at some horror he had never in his wildest fear expected to see.

"Place your weapon on the floor. Now!"

The first of the two men, the obvious leader, hesitated. On his face was the clear battle between his fear of the unseen voice and his greed for the squat statue in the bag he held in his left hand. He looked quickly at the open door that seemed to offer such a simple escape. The pistol he had used to break the glass case was still in his right hand. His whole body tensed, shivered, with an effort to raise the pistol and dash for the open door at the same time.

The man did neither.

The chilling laugh rang out a third time and filled the small room of the Pauli Gallery. There was a faint sound of movement. The shadows of the room themselves seemed to move.

A face appeared bathed in a sharp red glow.

The face transfixed the two thieves, rooting them to where they stood staring at the glowing red face.

The wide brim of a black slouch hat shaded the face, its crown fading into the darkness above the red glow. Beneath the brim two fiery eyes burned with an inner power greater than the red glow that lighted the face. A hawk nose stood out like a deadly sword in the glow above the black folds of a great cape that covered the lower part of the glowing face. The red glow of light itself came from one hand of the shrouded figure where a red gem shed a burning inner light upward to outline the grim face whose thin lips were stern and yet smiling a thin, cold smile.

"So, Pedro Mingo," the voice of the looming black figure said, his stern lips barely moving, "we meet again."

It was the second man, the follower, to whom the shrouded black figure spoke. Pedro Mingo had not once moved his eyes from the face that shone in the red light of the fiery ring. Now he opened his mouth to speak. Twice he tried to speak but the words would not come. When they came at last, the words were more a terrified croak than human speech.

"The . . . The Shadow!"

"Yes, Pedro," the shrouded figure said, "The Shadow. Again you have crossed the path of The Shadow! Was once not enough? You are not afraid of me? Have you not learned that the weed of crime bears bitter fruit, Pedro Mingo?"

Mingo said nothing, his mouth moving, his lips working, but no sound coming from his frightened mouth. The Shadow had turned his face toward Mingo, and now, suddenly, the first man moved. He stepped toward the open door, raised the pistol in his right hand. The face of The Shadow turned quickly toward him.

The man stopped moving. His hand that held the pistol stopped moving. The pistol seemed suspended in the air, not pointing up or down. The man blinked, brushed his eyes, shook his head as if trying to clear away a thick fog. A heavy cloud seemed to cover his brain. He could not remember what he had wanted to do, what he had been about to do. He forgot the pistol in his hand. The cloud settled over his mind and he could think of nothing, remember nothing. The cloud seemed to come from the shrouded and indistinct figure in the gloom before him. Not from the burning eyes alone, but from the whole figure—from the face in the red glow, from the wide-brimmed hat and the great cape and the

glowing red jewel on the long finger, from the whole person of the strange man before him.

"Who . . . who is he?" the man said to his partner, Pedro Mingo. "What . . . what does he want?"

It was the Shadow who answered.

"You are a thief, Morris Kitt," The Shadow said. "You are a thief and you will be punished. You cannot escape The Shadow. You will tell me now who else you are working with!"

Morris Kitt, the leader of the two thieves, battled the cloud covering his mind. Kitt moved his head from side to side, his whole body shivered and trembled.

"No," Kitt croaked. "No."

"You will tell me!"

The eyes of The Shadow bored into the man.

"No . . . no . . . no . . ."

The second man, Pedro Mingo, spoke.

"Tell him," Mingo whispered, "tell him."

"I . . . no . . . no . . ."

"Tell him!" Mingo hissed. "He'll find out, I know him! Tell him, Kitt!"

Morris Kitt, thief, fought against the cloud that pressed down and down over his mind, blotting out his brain, destroying his will. He fought, but the cloud enveloped his mind until he could no longer remember why he should not do what the mysterious black figure asked.

"I . . . I . . . I . . . yes, all right, I'll tell you who . . ."

The sound was no more than a faint hiss in the dark room of the Pauli Gallery. A soft, light sound like a sharp puff of wind. No more than a quick blow of breath in the night. it came from the blackened doorway behind where The Shadow loomed, his face in the red glow fixed toward the stammering figure of Morris Kitt. A short, sharp rush of air, a click, and nothing more.

Morris Kitt fell without a sound.

On the floor Kitt gasped once, touched his throat with a clawing hand, and lay still.

For a long second that seemed like hours there was neither motion nor sound in the dark of the small gallery room. Pedro Mingo looked down at Morris Kitt and blinked. The Shadow took a single step toward the fallen man. Morris Kitt himself lay with his eyes bulging and wide open. Eyes that glazed and went cold even as The Shadow took his single step toward the fallen man.

Morris Kitt was dead.

Suddenly, recovered from the instant of shock, The Shadow whirled and glided away into the dark. His shrouded figure went through the open doorway like a piece of the night itself. His great black cape flying out behind like the dark wings of a giant night bird, The Shadow raced through the rooms and corridors to the back door that stood open with the faint moonlight flooding through. He ran through the doorway and emerged into an alley behind the buildings.

The thin moonlight bathed the alley in a pale, steel-blue light. The deep eyes of The Shadow, with their power to see in the darkness, searched left and right. To the left there was nothing but a dead-end at the rear of a tall building. To the right he saw nothing at first but another dead-end far in the distance at the other end of the block. Then his keen eyes saw the running figure. Even as The Shadow watched the figure vanished.

The Shadow raced through the alley in the hot night toward the figure he had seen so briefly. The black slouch hat and black cape seemed to move over the ground without touching it, the cape itself streaming out in the darkness. He reached the far end of the alley. There was nothing but a wall and door that was locked on the inside. The figure he had seen for an instant had vanished into thin air. The Shadow turned and slowly retraced his steps.

His piercing eyes noted every dark window and doorway. He tested all the doors and windows. All were securely locked. He found no trace of the passage of an escaping killer. As he searched his keen ears listened. But there was no sound, not until he reached the single building on the block that showed light through its windows. In this building, on the ground floor, there was light through the windows and noise. The Adrian Gallery.

In the dark alley The Shadow stood motionless, blending into the night, and listened to the sounds of music and laughter, the ebb and flow of voices, inside the Adrian Gallery. He knew what was going on inside the Adrian Gallery—an opening night party for a new Turkish painter. The Shadow himself, in his alter-ego guise as Lamont Cranston, had been invited. But, until this moment, The Shadow had had other business this night. Now he stood and his eyes looked at the lighted windows of the Adrian Gallery.

He glided silently to the rear door and windows of the Adrian Gallery. All were locked from the inside. They could

have been left open and locked only after the unseen killer had gone into the building. But the figure he had seen had not turned toward the buildings. The figure had simply vanished in mid-alley. Turning, The Shadow moved soundlessly back to the center of the moonlighted alley. He looked down. Then he bent close to the ground.

The alley was paved with a combination of asphalt and cobblestones. It was old, the alley, and the cobblestones were worn smooth with use. They had not been tampered with. But set in the stones, directly behind the Adrian Gallery, The Shadow saw the round metal top of an old coal chute. At one time the alley had been open at both ends and used for the delivery of fuel and other necessities to the buildings. Now the alley was closed off, and the fuel oil, was pumped into the buildings through small valves set in the sidewalk in front—or the buildings used central steam to heat. There was no more need for a coal chute.

But this coal chute cover had been used recently.

The Shadow bent closer to the round metal cover to make sure he had seen the marks. There was no doubt. This cover had been lifted and replaced within the week. For another few seconds he remained bent over the iron cover. Then, satisfied, he straightened up and glided away down the alley back toward the open rear door of the Pauli Gallery.

Inside the Pauli Gallery he moved swiftly through the dark and empty rooms, the paintings on the walls dull and colorless in the night, until he was again inside the small room where the smashed glass case stood in the center of the floor. The bag with the statue in it was still there. The body of Morris Kitt lay where the thief had fallen. But Pedro Mingo was gone. The Shadow smiled when he saw that Mingo had taken his chance to escape. He was not disturbed by the flight of Mingo, that was taken care of.

Quickly, and in silence, The Shadow went to work. He opened the bag and removed the statue. He studied it carefully, and then returned it to the smashed glass case. This done, he turned to the body of the dead man. His quick, sharp eyes studied the body of Morris Kitt from a distance. From the bulging eyes, the grimace of the tortured lips, the twisted position of the legs, it was clear that Morris Kitt had died quickly and not from any simple cause such as a bullet.

The Shadow crossed to the body and bent closer. The hands of the dead man were still tensed into a clawlike shape, the right hand still touching the throat where he had

clawed in the instant of death. A tiny hole, a point of blood and no more, showed on the throat. The blood was already dry, crusted over the small, pin-point wound. A pin prick and no more, but it had been enough. Not as high as the sky, nor as deep as a well, but it had been enough, it would serve. Swift, silent, sure and deadly.

Too deadly. From the bulging eyes, the clawlike fingers, The Shadow knew that the tiny missile had not killed Morris Kitt by itself. Not the missile, the needle-like bullet, but what had been inside the bullet. Poison. And shot without any sound beyond the puff of air. He began to search the floor of the silent gallery. He searched in the dark, his eyes seeing in the dark almost as well as in the light. He searched all around the body, and then began to cover the floor outward from the body inch by inch. At last he found it.

In his long, thin fingers it was no more than a tiny, thin glass needle. Thicker and squatter than a needle, and hollow. Metal-ringed for strength. Shot from an air gun. Silent, a pin prick, and death within moments. The Shadow studied the lethal little dart. The point had broken off and would still be in the wound. He put the pellet-dart inside the secret folds of his cloak, and returned to his search of the body of Morris Kitt. But he found nothing else. Kitt had been too experienced a thief to work with identification of any kind. The dead man's clothes yielded no clues. A swift but careful search of the gallery room offered no more.

For some time The Shadow stood in the small dark room among the glass cases. His gaunt face was invisible now, the glow of the fire-opal girasol down at his side as he stood in thought. Someone beside The Shadow had known, or guessed that Morris Kitt would burglarize the Pauli Gallery that night. Someone whom Kitt could have named, perhaps was about to name. That was almost certainly why Kitt had been killed. And yet how could the killer have known that the Shadow, or anyone else, would catch Morris Kitt this night and force him to talk? The killer could not have known that. Yet the killer was there waiting in the shadows.

His eyes grim, The Shadow left the small room and the body of Morris Kitt, and moved silently through the rooms of the dark gallery until he reached the office. In the office he picked up the telephone. His voice disguised, he told the police of the burglary and murder. He hung up before any questions could be asked. That done, The Shadow glided from the desk and faded into the darker part of the office.

Moments later he emerged again into the faint light of the moon that came through the office window. But it was not The Shadow who stepped into the thin bluish light.

Lamont Cranston, internationally known wealthy socialite and businessman, now stood in the office of the Pauli Gallery. Prominent member of New York's exclusive *Cobalt Club*, confidante of police the world over, and personal friend of Police Commissioner Weston of New York, Lamont Cranston was a familiar figure to people on many levels, but there were few who knew that the socialite was also the major alter-ego of the mysterious Shadow. The complete muscular control learned by The Shadow long ago in the Orient from the great Master Chen T'a Tze, enabled him to make Lamont Cranston appear shorter, heavier and less like some great bird of prey. In Cranston's immobile face the hawklike features had become impassive, the eyes now half-closed and steady, no longer aflame with the inner fire of The Shadow.

With swift efficiency, Cranston returned the special black garb of The Shadow, and the fire-opal girasol ring, to their secret hiding places within his innocent business suit. He looked at his watch. The placid eyes of the wealthy socialite, so unlike the eyes of The Shadow, became thoughtful. Morris Kitt was dead, the killer had escaped, and, for the moment, Pedro Mingo was gone. But Kitt was an art thief, the Adrian Gallery was an art gallery, and Kitt had been seen entering the Adrian Gallery a few times. It was time for Lamont Cranston to attend the opening at the Adrian. An art gallery, and art thefts, and yet—were Kitt's thefts worth killing for?

Using a key from his special ring of keys, Cranston opened the front door of the Pauli Gallery and slipped out into the quiet of Queenstanding Place. He began to walk openly and casually toward the lighted entrance of the Adrian Gallery. He was now no more than the wealthy socialite on his way to a gallery opening. He looked neither right nor left so as not to seem in any way suspicious. For this reason, and because he was now only Cranston and not The Shadow, he did not see or know three actions that his sudden appearance set into motion.

As Lamont Cranston, and as all the many alter-egos of The Shadow, he had every mysterious power learned in the Orient and later by the Avenger—except one. The power of The Shadow to cloud men's minds, to reach out with his own mind and enter other minds, required him to always

wear the black cloak, the slouch hat, and the fire-opal girasol ring. The power did not reside in these things, nor did it come from the burning gaze of The Shadow's eyes. The power was of the mind, and of the whole person of The Shadow, and could be used only by The Shadow when he was in entirety The Shadow. Such had been the wish, the condition, of the great Chen T'a Tze when that Master of the Orient had passed on his power to The Shadow. A power that had been known and used only by The Master, and was now known and used only by The Shadow. So great a power must have its limits, Chen T'a Tze himself had commanded, and so, as Lamont Cranston, the crime-fighter did not sense the three occurrences his appearance created.

High above Queenstanding Place, on the roof of the building that housed the Adrian Gallery, two men stood in the dark night and looked down into the peaceful street where Lamont Cranston walked casually toward the lighted entrance to the Adrian. As Cranston reached the entrance and went in, both men quickly left their vantage point, crossed two roofs, and went down a fire escape into the alley where The Shadow had pursued the killer. One of the men moved rapidly toward the rear door of the Pauli Gallery that still stood open. The other man used a key and entered a different building through the back door. Both men vanished from the alley as police sirens began to wail in the distance and come closer.

At the same time that the two men had been watching Lamont Cranston, another man had observed both the two men and Cranston from a darkened doorway across Queenstanding Place that faced both the Pauli and Adrian Galleries. This man remained motionless and watching from his hidden doorway. Neither Cranston nor the two men on the roof had seen this watching man. And this man in the doorway, in his turn, did not see the fourth man who had observed all that had happened in the street, on the roof, and in the darkened doorway.

This fourth watching man had been seen by no one. Or, more accurately, he had been *seen* by everyone on the street, but no one had noticed him. He was a familiar figure on the streets of the city, seen but never really noticed. A taxi driver in his parked taxicab, alone inside his darkened taxi and, seemingly, asleep as the two men left the roof above and Lamont Cranston went into the Adrian Gallery.

The taxi driver was not asleep.

3

THE ADRIAN GALLERY was a cauldron of sound and motion. Men with glasses in their hands talked in loud voices, gesturing at the gaudy paintings on the walls, shouting the names of artists living and dead as they analyzed the work of the unknown Turk who was making his American debut as an artist this night. Women with glasses in their hands laughed, and talked, and swirled the bright colors of their summer dresses.

Lamont Cranston stood just inside the main room of the gallery a glass in his hand, and observed the scene. He had been extravagantly greeted at the door by the owner of the gallery, Hubert Adrian, and by his assistant, a pretty girl named Penelope Drake. Adrian and the Drake girl had swirled off to some other art patron as well known as Cranston, and Cranston was left now with his glass and the paintings themselves. They were large canvases belonging to the school known worldwide as "abstract expressionism"—the outpouring of the inner visions of the artist in abstract shapes of color that took no form from the real world.

Cranston studied the paintings with his trained eyes. He was known as an amateur critic of art, and he was more than an expert. He examined the Turk's work carefully. They were not, he saw, very good paintings, and he had come to the Adrian Gallery for other reasons.

He turned his attention to the people. The Turk himself was there, Turhan Kemel, as gaudy and flamboyant as his paintings. Kemel had gathered a group of young, pretty, and too-well-washed young ladies around him. The American girls seemed fascinated by the wild Turk. Kemel was dazzling them with words in his thick accent, but there was something about the Turk that was strange. Cranston saw that Kemel's eyes were not laughing with his mouth. The Turk had a worried expression in his eyes, almost a look of fear. And the look was directed constantly toward Hubert Adrian.

Adrian himself, a tall, elegant man dressed in the best and

most expensive clothes, circulated from group to group making pleasant and witty remarks, but, actually, selling his goods to any prospective buyer. Adrian was quick-mannered and sophisticated. A man in his forties, he worked through the crowded room as if he had no cares or problems in the world. He barely noticed his debuting artist, Turhan Kemel, and ignored his wife. Hubert Adrian seemed in his element, and gave every sign of enjoying himself hugely. Avis Adrian was not enjoying herself. The wife, a handsome blonde woman in her late thirties, seemed nervous, worried. A tall and elegant woman, Avis Adrian helped her husband run the gallery, Cranston knew, and now she, too, was moving among the crowd of guests offering food and drinks in a disguised attempt to sell paintings. But Cranston could see that Avis Adrian did not have her husband's apparent lack of cares. The elegant blonde had something on her mind.

While he thought about this, and continued to walk through the various rooms of the gallery in a pretense of interest in the paintings, Cranston let his impassive eyes search every inch of the place. The killer of Morris Kitt had vanished from the alley behind the Adrian Gallery. Somewhere in this crowd the killer could easily be lurking, watching. But Cranston saw nothing suspicious as he went on looking at the paintings—those of Turhan Kemel, and those in other rooms where the regular artists of the gallery were on display. His mind on other things than art tonight, he turned to go back to where the main party was being held. He stopped.

Something was strange about the artists displayed by the Adrian Gallery. He turned back and looked at many of them again. They were of all styles, and had little in common. His hooded eyes narrowed. The artists had only one thing in common—they were all foreign. There was not one American among them. Cranston looked around for a catalogue. He found one on a small desk at the rear of a side gallery. He opened it and studied it. The artists of the Adrian Gallery were from countries all the world, but none were from America.

“Are you interested in our catalogue Mr. Cranston?”

It was the assistant of Hubert Adrian, Penelope Drake, who had spoken. The pretty girl stood behind Cranston as he turned. A girl in her mid or late twenties, perhaps twenty-seven years old, she was dark-haired and pretty, but her eyes were hidden behind thick-rimmed glasses. Cranston had met her once or twice before at art functions, and he remembered

her as the serious, almost studious type. Now he smiled at her.

"I'm always interested in new artists, Miss Drake," Cranston said. "I see that most of your artists are unknown, at least in this country."

"We specialize in young and unknown painters, Mr. Cranston," Miss Drake said.

Her voice was cool and pedantic in odd contrast to what Cranston saw was a remarkably good figure. The girl had a beauty contest body, and she was really very pretty behind the glasses and the cool, academic manner. Cranston had the impression that Penelope Drake was in sharp control of her body, that she was efficient as well as cool. Her eyes behind the glasses watched him without a flicker, and yet there was a glint in them, a sense of considerably more passion than her manner would make one think she had, and a certain hint of amusement as she watched him.

"Mostly foreign it seems," Cranston said.

"Mr. Adrian believes in fostering both new talent and better understanding among the nations," the Drake girl said, and now she did smile. "In addition, it appears that foreign artists tend to sell better than our own painters, especially to our less sophisticated clients."

"The lure of the unusual," Cranston said. "Or is it just that the ignorant always think men with strange names make better artists?"

The girl laughed. "A little of both, I should think."

"The same kind of attraction we feel for such things as Pre-Columbian art, I imagine," Cranston said casually.

He watched the Drake girl intently from beneath the lids of his hooded and impassive eyes. The statue that Morris Kitt had tried to steal was a Pre-Columbian statue—one of the works of art made in the Americas before the arrival of Columbus, native art of the Indians of North and South America, but mostly of Mexico and south. Cranston watched, but the girl showed no surprise and very little interest.

"Probably," she said.

"There seems to be a great deal of interest in the Pre-Columbian period of late," Cranston persisted.

Again the girl did nothing at all suspicious. She seemed unaware of what Cranston was talking about. Hubert Adrian was not unaware. As Cranston had spoken about the sudden interest in Pre-Columbian art, the gallery owner and his wife had approached him and the Drake girl. Hubert Adrian

smiled as he heard what Cranston had said. Avis Adrian did not smile. The tall blonde had an expression on her face that was close to fear. Hubert Adrian gripped her arm as he spoke.

"By interest, Cranston, do you mean that strange series of thefts of Pre-Columbian works?" Adrian asked.

"I was thinking about it," Cranston said. "Seven robberies in two months. The Commissioner mentioned it to me."

"Don't tell me that Commissioner Weston is working on the case?" Adrian said with surprise. "Why, the whole thing, everything taken, can't be worth more than five thousand dollars at most. That's rather small for the Commissioner, isn't it?"

"He only mentioned the matter," Cranston said. "A rather strange series of burglaries. Who would be so interested in such unprofitable thefts?"

"A crank, no doubt," Penelope Drake said.

"Cranks usually steal more obvious things than ancient native American statues, Miss Drake," Cranston said. "It takes a certain knowledge of art to know Pre-Columbian works."

Hubert Adrian laughed. "These days everyone is an expert, Cranston, and everyone knows about Pre-Columbian."

"Perhaps," Cranston said. "You don't happen to handle such works yourself, do you, Adrian?"

"Me? No, Cranston, I'm strictly modern. Much easier to sell these days, and a lot easier to get," Adrian said.

Cranston looked at Avis Adrian. "What about you, Mrs. Adrian? You don't happen to be interested in primitive art, do you?"

"I..." Avis Adrian began.

Hubert Adrian held his wife's arm and smiled. "My wife just helps me, and a lot of help she is."

Penelope Drake looked at her watch. "We must be closing soon, perhaps we all better go back to Kemel, he is the reason for the party after all. Tell me, Mr. Cranston, just how do you like Kemel's work?"

Hubert Adrian nodded quickly. "Yes, we better get back to Turhan."

Now Adrian seemed nervous, and Cranston watched the tall gallery owner from beneath his hooded eyes. But he allowed the Drake girl to lead him back into the main room where the Turk was still holding forth to his bevy of young ladies. Adrian mopped sweat from his brow in the hot night,

although the gallery itself was fully air-conditioned. Avis Adrian had vanished. Adrian himself resumed his round of talking with his guests, the party less crowded now. Penelope Drake excused herself as they reentered the main room. Cranston watched the pretty girl turn quickly away and go up the stairs to the second floor offices of the gallery.

"Mr. Cranston, I believe," a voice said behind him.

Cranston turned to see a thin, dapper man of average height. The man was about thirty-seven years old, perhaps older or younger by a few years, and was now smiling directly at Cranston. There was a tense, wiry quality about the slender man. He wore a thin pencil mustache barely visible on his upper lip because it was the pale and sandy color of the man's hair. Cranston heard the faint trace of an English accent in the man's precise voice.

"I thought I recognized you," the man said. "Should have guessed you would be here, eh? I've heard of your work with the younger painters."

"Have you?" Cranston said.

"Of course. Name's Lambert, Jonathan Lambert from *The Critic* in London," the man said.

"That would be an English art magazine, I remember it," Cranston said. "I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Lambert."

"The pleasure is all mine, I assure you, my dear chap," Jonathan Lambert said. "Thought this affair was going to be a total washout, eh? Terribly bad stuff. The Turk should go home without a moment's hesitation. Frightful work, really."

"You don't think Kemel is very good?" Cranston said.

"Don't tell me you do? Of course not, bloody terrible. I can't imagine why Adrian brought his stuff over. Adrian can't be that lacking in judgment, can he? I suppose he can. Can't think why he bothered with the man otherwise."

"No," Cranston said. It had already occurred to him to wonder about Adrian. Kemel was *not* a good painter, although not as bad as Lambert was implying.

"Be that as it may," Lambert said briskly, "I can save the night by interviewing you. *The Critic* knows all about you, as I said. Now, aside from this Turkish nonsense, what about the rest of Adrian's painters? Some of them seem not bad. Tell me, are you as interested as Adrian in the work of foreign young painters?"

"I'm interested in all good young painters," Cranston said.

"Of course, very good," Lambert said. "You rich men have to help out, eh? But why specifically foreign, eh? I mean,

Adrian obviously specializes in it. Unknown and foreign, that's Adrian's cup of tea. You're here so I expect you share that interest. Why else would you be here, you're not a critic, you don't have to come to these things."

"I like openings," Cranston said, and smiled. "Personally, though, I like the younger American painters: Johns, Rauschenberg, Saul Lambert, your namesake."

"Very good," Lambert said. "Always stick to what you know, eh? Stay in your own bailiwick, as it were. No end of trouble when you get into something you don't know much about."

Cranston looked sharply at the English art critic. Had there been a small but definite note of something very much like a warning in Lambert's voice? Cranston could not be sure. A warning, or, perhaps, a threat? If there had been such a meaning in Lambert's voice, it was gone as quickly as it had come, and now the English art critic was jabbering on about the state of art on both sides of the Atlantic.

"...really can't understand why Adrian imports these second-rate foreigners..."

Cranston smiled and nodded politely as he pretended to listen, but his quiet eyes glanced carefully and unobtrusively around the now half-empty gallery. It was just past 1:00 A.M., and the party was ending. Hubert Adrian still moved through the room smiling, cajoling, selling his wares to potential art patrons. Avis Adrian and the Turk, Turhan Kemel, had gotten together. The Turk did not seem happy about his first showing in New York. Avis Adrian had been watching Cranston until the wealthy socialite looked at her. Penelope Drake had apparently not come back downstairs since she had gone up. Cranston was wondering about this fact when his impassive eyes saw a man standing in the main entrance to the gallery.

The man, who wore a chauffeur's uniform but did not look much like a chauffeur, was beckoning to Cranston. Lambert, who was still talking, noticed the chauffeur at the same time. The English art critic nodded toward the chauffeur.

"I think that chauffeur wants to see you, Cranston."

"Yes," Cranston said. "I had better see what he wants."

"Well then, glad I met you, eh?" Lambert said. "I'll look forward to our next meeting."

"Can I drop you somewhere?" Cranston said.

"No, thank you, Cranston," Lambert said quickly. "Decent of you, but I'm expecting a call."

"Good night, then."

"Good night, Cranston," Lambert said.

Cranston took his leave of Hubert and Avis Adrian. He noted that the tall blonde woman still seemed nervous. The Turkish painter, Kemel, only glared moodily at him, probably because he had not spoken to the Turk all night. He then walked casually across the room and out the main entrance into the dark night of Queenstanding Place. The traffic still passed, thinned out now, and a long, black Rolls Royce stood at the curb. Cranston walked to the Rolls and got into the back seat. The chauffeur turned to speak to Cranston.

"Margo called Burbank," he said. "She's got a report. Shrevvy's waiting, too."

"Very well, Stanley," Cranston said. "We'll go to the room."

Stanley, chauffeur and bodyguard to Cranston, and one of The Shadow's most trusted agents, nodded and put the car into gear. The big Rolls Royce moved silently away from the curb and into the thin stream of late night traffic. Soon the big car turned downtown on Park Avenue toward the office building where Lamont Cranston had his offices—and where The Shadow had the hidden secret room that was his headquarters. Stanley did not turn as he spoke to his chief.

"I saw the police go into that Pauli Gallery," Stanley said.

"Morris Kitt was killed, Stanley," Cranston said.

"Killed?" Stanley said in sharp surprise. "You mean someone killed him for those old statues he's been stealing?"

"No, Stanley, not for the statues," Cranston said grimly from the dark interior of the back seat. "Those few statues are not nearly important enough to kill for. There is something more going on, Stanley, something much bigger."

Moments later, as the big Rolls Royce drove down Park Avenue in the late night hours, Lamont Cranston no longer sat in the back seat. Now The Shadow sat there, his burning eyes deep in concentration as he thought of the death of Morris Kitt—an unimportant art thief.

4

A CITY that never sleeps can be a friend or an enemy. A friend to the lonely, solitary man who walks the streets in search of faces. An enemy to the man who runs through the streets in search of escape. For Pedro Mingo, the city was a terrifying enemy this night.

From the moment The Shadow had appeared, and Morris Kitt had died, Mingo had been afraid, terrified. When The Shadow ran from the inner room of the Pauli Gallery, Mingo had not moved for a long time. No thought of escape, of running, came into his mind for many endless minutes. Then, The Shadow gone and with no sign of his return, Mingo began to realize that he had been left alone. He had been forgotten. Or, at least, The Shadow had left him alone and free to escape. He did not feel free. He knew that a man did not escape The Shadow. And yet, perhaps he had been forgotten. Perhaps The Shadow did not care about him!

He ran.

Mingo ran out into the alley and turned left to the building at the end of the alley where there was an open cellar door through which he and Kitt had entered the alley less than fifteen minutes before. Now Kitt was dead, The Shadow was after him, and Mingo was on the run. He crept through the dark cellar and out into the busy streets of the city.

To a man on the run all faces are the faces of the enemy.

Pedro Mingo moved through the city west and south from Queenstanding Place and the Pauli Gallery with his eyes watching every face that passed. He lurked in the shadows close to the buildings, crossing the wide avenues on the dead run to gain the shadows on the other side. He ran, and hid, ran, and hid all through the city until he was at last close to his hotel deep in the heart of the Chelsea district of lower Manhattan.

Chelsea is an area of piers and waterfront taverns, of garbage and dark back alleys, of rat-infested tenements and small rooms where nameless men live their forgotten lives, of

thieves and racketeers and murder done for small pay or sudden hate. Housing projects battle the slums, and the police and respectable people battle the criminals and the drifters, and the ships are unloaded with few questions asked by the owners of the ships. A scar on the city, a place of work for the belly dancers in the cheap night clubs, and a home for men who hope no one will remember their names. For Pedro Mingo the district was home, and he slid furtively, but with a slow sensation of relief, into the lobby of his cheap hotel.

The dozing night clerk did not look up as Mingo passed silently through the rotted and stained old furniture of the lobby, across the bare tile floor, and up the stairs toward his third floor room. There had been no one else in the sleazy lobby. Mingo paused at the first landing to look back to be sure that no one had been hiding in the lobby, but it remained deserted except for the dozing night clerk. Mingo went on up the stairs to his room.

The room was small and bare. Light from the single naked bulb that hung on a long cord from the ceiling barely reached into the dark corners. The ceiling itself was cracked and peeling. There was a gaping hole in the wall beside the narrow unmade bed. The faucet in the stained wash basin dripped. Roaches ran across the floor, and there was a sound of small feet scurrying inside the single chest of drawers. Two straight wooden chairs stood beside a bare table where the remains of a meal had turned hard on a single dirty plate.

Pedro Mingo saw and heard none of this. Neither the room nor the roaches were new to him, and one room was exactly like another in his half-asleep life. Mingo had more on his frantic mind than the sight and condition of his room. The instant he had locked his door behind him, he crossed the shabby room to its single closet. He took out a battered cardboard suitcase and began to pull his few clothes from the closet and throw them into it. He picked up his single extra pair of shoes and threw them in. He crossed the room to the chest of drawers and took out his few shirts and other small clothes and packed them. He went to the hole in his wall and took out a half-full pint of whisky. He turned to carry the whisky to his suitcase when there was a knock on his door.

Mingo froze where he stood.

The knock came again. A light knock, soft and careful. Mingo did not move. He seemed to have stopped breathing. Only his hands moved. The hand that held the whisky bottle

shook like the hand of a man with palsy. The other hand held onto the table. The knock came again, more insistent now.

"Pedro?" a voice said. "I know you're in there. Let me in."

It was the voice of a woman. Mingo went limp. His shaking hand wiped the sweat from his face in the stifling heat of the room. He put the whisky bottle on the table and went to the door and opened it. The woman smiled at him and came in. She was also carrying a bottle of whisky, a full bottle, which she placed on the table beside the half-empty one.

"There," she said, "get us some glasses, I need a shot."

She was a woman of average height, and pretty in a coarse way. Her dark hair was swept up and piled on her head in a style that had gone out of favor years ago. The hair itself was streaked with the remains of what had once been a blonde bleach. At this moment large strands of hair had fallen and hung loose and unkempt about her face. Her face itself was heavily madeup with thick, heavy red lipstick, green eye shadow, heavy mascara, and even a trace of rouge. The makeup was worn and caked on her skin as if she had forgotten to remove it the night before and had slept with it still on. She wore rings on almost every finger, and her wrist was encased in cheap, tarnished brass bracelets.

"What a night, you got no idea," the woman said as she found two glasses and sat on the edge of the table to pour two long drinks of straight whisky. "You figure a guy's got money, why's he got to be so cheap, you know? I mean, after I been on my feet modeling old Schultz's cheap dresses for them all day, the least they could do is buy a girl a decent meal and take her for some real fun. Not them. Beer and hamburgers and they figure they got the world coming."

As she talked and poured, her long legs swung in the air where she sat on the table. She had very good legs and she knew it. The cheap print dress she wore had hiked up above her knees to show black garters. The dress was cut low and loose at the neck and her breasts rose full and provocative in the deep V-neck. A thick strand of cheap pearls hung at her throat. When she had poured the drinks she drank half of it in a single gulp, and then sat there swinging her leg and playing with the gaudy string of pearls at her throat.

"I mean, who do they think they are, you know?" she said. "Just because they buy from Schultz they think they can treat me like dirt. Beer and hamburgers and dancin' my feet

flat up to three in the A.M.! Then they want to play, you know?"

Mingo had not stopped packing all this time. Now he turned and walked to pick up his whisky. He drained it in a single gulp and poured a second drink. He was no more than a few inches taller than the gaudy woman herself, and his eyes stared straight into her face when he spoke.

"I told you to lay off goin' out with them buyers," Mingo said.

"Aw, Pedro," the girl said, "you know Schultz says we got to be nice to the out of town buyers."

"I told you to quit that job," Mingo said, drinking the raw whisky.

The woman suddenly swore. "Damn, how do I quit? You gonna keep me in lace and panties? All you got is big talk. A month I been going with you, right, and what you done for me! Nothin'! A whole month and all I got from you is sweet talk and big talk! All the time you talk about how much dough you're gonna make, but do I see it? No. You just talk, and talk..."

While the woman had been talking angrily, Mingo had finished his second whisky and had returned to his packing. There was little left to pack, and Mingo put his last few poor articles into the suitcase. He looked around once. Then he went to the bottom drawer of the bureau and brought out a small, snub-nosed .38 Police Special revolver. He placed that into the suitcase under his shirts. The woman was so busy talking she did not seem to notice the pistol.

"... you're just small time! A small time punk!" the woman concluded.

Mingo whirled. "Shut up! You hear me, Molly? Just shut up!"

The girl opened her mouth to say something in anger. But she said nothing. She stared at Pedro Mingo as if a little afraid of him. Mingo turned back to his suitcase and snapped it shut. He tightened a belt around the cheap suitcase, and then walked back to the table to pour a third drink from the bottle the woman had brought. The woman, Molly, suddenly stared at the suitcase as if she had only just seen it, had only just this instant become aware of the fact that Mingo was packing.

"You goin' somewhere?" Molly said.

"Yeh," Mingo said, "I'm goin' somewhere. I'm goin' as far as I can get, and fast."

The woman's face changed. Some of the cheap hardness

seemed to flow out of her face to be replaced with something softer, more concerned with Mingo and his troubles.

"You're in trouble? Oh, Pedro, honey, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to push you. It's been a good month, take me with you."

Mingo nodded almost to himself. "A good month, yeh. I kind of like you, Molly. You got more than them other girls. Only this time I got to travel alone."

The woman poured two more drinks and lighted two cigarettes. She gave one of the cigarettes to Mingo. He began to smoke it drawing deeply on the cigarette. The woman sat back on the edge of the table, her eyes on the floor as her hand stroked her whisky glass.

"The job went wrong tonight?" she asked.

"Wrong? Yeh, it went wrong. Kitt's dead."

The woman looked up sharply. "Dead? Kitt got killed?"

"Yeh. Don't ask me how or why. We got in smooth as silk, Kitt had the alarm fixed like always. I opened the door, I got the touch for that, and we walked right to that statue he wanted. Just like all the other statues, you know? He cracks the case, the statue's in the bag, and we're set to blow the scene. Then the roof caved in."

"How? What happened?" the woman said quickly, almost anxiously. "The cops had the place staked out?"

"The cops? Hell no. If it was the cops I'd feel lucky," Mingo said. He looked at the woman. "The Shadow showed up."

"The Shadow?" the woman said, her eyes mystified.

"Yeh, The Shadow. Maybe you don't know The Shadow, but I do. I tangled with him once before and it got me sent up river. When you look at The Shadow you can't think, you can't move, you can't run or do nothin'. He's got some power, some kind of power you can't fight, and ain't no one else in the world got it. I just wish it was the cops after me."

"What about Kitt?" the woman asked. "Did this *Shadow* . . . ?"

"No, it was someone else," Mingo said. "The Shadow, he had us dead to rights. Even Kitt couldn't fight him. Then someone shot something at Kitt and he just dropped dead right there. I figure maybe I was next only The Shadow went after the killer and chased him off. Then I beat it fast. Now I'm gonna run as far as there is to run."

"Someone else? Who?" the woman said sharply.

Mingo did not notice the sharp tone of her voice. The small thief just shook his head and began to shiver again. His scared eyes looked up at the woman who still sat on the edge of the bare table in the shabby little room.

"I don't know who or why, you know? That stuff wasn't worth that much. Kitt paid me good to help him with the jobs, but the stuff we got wasn't worth any real dough. I only went along with the capers 'cause I figured to talk him into some real big jobs. Only now I got The Shadow after me, maybe the cops, and maybe the people who killed Kitt. I'm scared, Molly. I'm running. The Shadow is bad enough, but guys who kill and I don't know why is even worse."

"What about me?" Molly said. "Take me with you, honey."

"Not this time. Fast and light, that's how I got to go. Maybe in a couple of months I can send for you."

"A couple of months is a long time, honey," the woman said.

"So you find another boy! I ain't dying for you."

"You're that scared?"

"I'm that scared, baby. Kitt got killed, maybe I'm next."

Mingo turned then and picked up his suitcase. He took one last long pull on the whisky bottle, and started for the door. His pale face never turned to look at the woman again. She sat there with her long legs swinging, her fingers playing with her gaudy beads. Mingo opened the door and looked out. He closed the door as if he had seen a snake about to strike. He dropped the suitcase and leaned with his back against the door. He was breathing heavily, thickly, his eyes filled with sudden fear.

"What is it?" the woman said.

"Out there," Mingo said, "a guy watchin'! Some guy I never seen before. They found me! I'm finished."

"You sure you never seen the man? Take another look," the woman said.

"I don't got to," Mingo said. "I got a good look. Maybe it's a cop I don't know, but I know all the cops. Maybe it's one of The Shadow's boys, or maybe it's one of the guys what killed Kitt. It don't matter much no more."

The woman stood up now and walked close to Mingo. She leaned close and hissed in his ear.

"Did he see you?"

"No, he was lookin' away."

"Okay, I got an idea. He knows this is your room, right?"

Okay, I'll sneak out the fire escape to my room, it's around the corner, right? I'll go out and keep him busy. When you hear me give a cough, you cut out of here and go to my room fast. You got that?"

"I don't know," Mingo said, the fear shaking his voice.

"You have to, honey," the woman insisted. "You're boxed in here. What do you want to do, wait for him to come for you? He's just watching now, that means he's probably waiting for friends. You want to wait for his friends?"

Mingo shook. "Okay, okay. But why your room? I'll cut out of the whole hotel, out of the city."

"No! How do we know his friends aren't watching the hotel downstairs? Maybe that's what they want, to make you run out right into their hands!"

Mingo paled where he stood. The small thief still shook, but now he nodded his head to indicate that he agreed. The woman patted his arm and crossed the tiny room to the window. She opened the window and climbed out, her tight dress clinging to the curves of her body. She went down the fire escape to an alley behind the hotel. Around the corner of the building was the ladder of a second fire escape. Deftly she piled garbage cans until she could stand on them and reach up with a long pole that she had picked from behind the cans. The pole pulled the weighted ladder down and she went up this second fire escape to another window of the third floor.

Inside her own room she crossed to the door. She listened for a moment, and then opened the door and stepped out into the dingy corridor. She walked to the end of the corridor to where it joined the corridor that led to Mingo's room. At the head of the stairs a tall man stood against the wall on the far side of the door to Mingo's room. The woman smiled. Mingo would not have to pass the man to get into her room. She took a deep breath and stepped into the cross corridor. She walked slowly, provocatively toward the man. She passed the door to Mingo's room and stopped in front of the stranger.

"Alone?" she said.

"Busy," the man said shortly, his eyes still on the door to Mingo's room.

The man was smoking, and leaning quietly against the wall. It was obvious that he had no intention of approaching Mingo, but was simply watching the small thief's room. The woman smiled at him.

"Too busy for me?"

"Beat it, sister," the man said curtly. "You could get into trouble that way."

"What way?" she said innocently. "I just asked if you were alone."

The man's eyes looked her up and down. Her cheap clothes, the deep neckline, the cheap pearls, the thick and caked makeup, all seemed to be reflected in his eyes as he looked at her. The distaste was clear on his face.

"I'm not interested, sister. Now beat it before you find trouble, okay?" the man said.

The woman shrugged, coughed loudly, turned and suddenly missed the top step of the stairs. Her high-heeled shoes buckled under her and she lost her balance and started to fall headlong down the stairs. The man leaped and caught her. She clutched at him, her weight wrestling him around until his back was to the door to Mingo's room. He half staggered himself as she clung and pulled him down the stairs. Her face rested against his shoulder for an instant. In that instant she saw the small figure of Pedro Mingo vanishing around the corner toward her room. She smiled and managed to stand up. The man stepped back.

"Thanks," she said. "That could have mussed my hair some."

"Watch your step. Those heels you wear must be four inches high," the man said.

"It makes my legs look good. A girl's got to show her wares," she said.

The stranger turned away and resumed his post against the wall. His cigarette had fallen, and he lighted a fresh one. His eyes were fixed again in the door of Pedro Mingo's room. The woman smiled to herself as she went down the stairs to the lobby. She wondered how long the man would watch the empty room.

In the lobby she passed the clerk who still dozed fitfully at his night desk. She went straight to a telephone booth in the far corner of the small, shabby lobby. Inside she dropped in her dime and dialed. As she listened to the distant sound of the telephone ringing she seemed to change. She seemed to become taller than she was, and her eyes seemed to become deeper, clearer, and more intelligent. When she spoke there was no trace of her former uneducated speech. Her voice was clear and low and precise.

"Burbank? Margo here. I'm ready now."

5

THE ROOM hidden high in the Park Avenue office building was lighted by a dim blue light that seemed to come from nowhere and everywhere. The blue glow filled the room as if it came from the walls and ceiling themselves, and yet no walls or ceiling were visible. Nothing could be seen in the room except a large, rectangular box that glowed a deeper blue. On the box itself there were dials, and gauges, and a small round grid that looked like a speaker.

From the blue gloom of the room a figure materialized. It was The Shadow. Garbed all in black, his cloak around him and the broad brim of the slouch hat pulled low over his fiery eyes and hawk nose, The Shadow glided to the glowing instrument and sat down. His long finger with the fire-opal girasol burning red on it reached out toward a switch. The opal seemed to burn more brightly and there was a low hum from the instrument.

"Report, Margo," The Shadow intoned.

The voice of Margo Lane, The Shadow's most trusted agent and the executive secretary of Lamont Cranston, seemed to emerge from the instrument itself and fill the blue room. Margo's voice, and the faint hum of the special communications instrument, were the only sounds in the hidden secret headquarters of The Shadow.

"Pedro Mingo returned to his hotel after the death of Morris Kitt. I met him there, as usual. He is very afraid, he was ready to run without his girl friend Molly, in short myself. But there was a man watching, and I persuaded him to hide in my room. He is there now. I think I can hold him for some hours, at least until morning."

"Good," The Shadow said into the instrument. "Now repeat all that happened in complete detail."

Margo's voice continued to fill the silence of the dim blue room shut away above the city. No sounds from the street or from anywhere else within the giant building could reach into the sanctuary of the hidden chamber. Margo repeated her

entire conversation with Pedro Mingo in complete details. When she had finished, The Shadow spoke again.

"Mingo does not know who killed Morris Kitt?"

"Apparently not," Margo's voice said. "Unless he is a better actor than I think he is, he has no idea who killed Kitt or why. He appears to know very little about Kitt beyond the recent thefts. He also does not seem to know who the stranger watching him could be. My impression is that the stranger in the hall is some kind of policeman."

"Are you sure he tells you the truth, Margo?" The Shadow asked from the blue room.

"As much as he tells the truth to anyone," Margo said from the telephone booth of the shabby hotel. "He likes me. In the month I've been working on him we've become very close. He tells me as much as he tells himself, I think. I'm not at all sure, though, that he even tells himself the real truth."

In the dim blue light of the hidden room above the city The Shadow stood up and began to pace silently. His shrouded black figure floated back and forth through the diffuse blue light like some great bird of prey circling the sky in search of a victim. But it was an answer The Shadow searched for, and as he moved soundlessly through the silent hidden sanctuary his voice reached to Margo far away in the telephone booth of the Chelsea hotel. He spoke softly as if she were in the blue room with him.

"Was Mingo part of the whole series of thefts?"

In her solitary telephone booth in the cheap hotel Margo watched the sleeping clerk through the glass of the booth. Her eyes watched the stairs to be sure that no one came down to see her in the booth. Her mind worked now on two levels, one part of her consciousness alert and involved in the shabby hotel and her immediate surroundings, the other part of her in the distant blue room with The Shadow.

"Mingo was only hired," Margo explained as the strange conversation went on across the distance, and yet as if there were no distance between The Shadow and his agent. "He was paid to help—in advance and in cash. Kitt was the organizer and leader of each theft. He chose the target and took the statues."

The Shadow paced, glided, through the blue room. "Why, Margo? Why hire a man, pay him, and then steal only art works so special only museums or collectors would want them? They have no real market value. And where are they?"

Margo agreed from her booth in the hotel. "I have found no trace of the statues. Ming knows nothing about where they are. He does not know why Kitt wanted them. He worked only for the cash in advance, and his hope that Kitt would eventually decide to steal something of real value."

"No one has seen the statues, Margo. They have vanished. The police have no clues," The Shadow said softly as he paced the hidden room, as much asking questions of himself as telling Margo the facts of the case. "Now Morris Kitt has been killed. Somehow, Margo, the stolen statues and Kitt's death must be connected, but it is not because of the value of the statues. There must be some other connection, some other reason to kill Kitt."

"But what could it be? Kitt was only a thief, an unimportant exconvict."

"Perhaps, Margo," The Shadow said grimly, "and perhaps not. I begin to think Morris Kitt was more than he seemed. The killer could have shot Mingo, and even myself, but he only shot Kitt and ran. And he knew Kitt would be in the Pauli Gallery.

"I think, Margo, it is time The Shadow learned more about the past of Morris Kitt. I will have Lamont Cranston talk to Commissioner Weston tomorrow. If that man watching Mingo is a policeman, Margo, I have the feeling that the police know something we do not, and we know what they do not know.

"Two different cases both involving Kitt?" Margo asked.

"It begins to seem that way, Margo. Cranston will find out from Commissioner Weston, but first I will talk with Pedro Mingo. Return to your room, Margo, and keep Mingo there until I come. Mingo knows The Shadow and is afraid of me, perhaps too afraid. I will talk to him as Cranston, I may learn more that way."

"I'll hold him," Margo Lane said firmly.

In the telephone booth the beautiful agent of The Shadow hung up and walked out into the lobby. Her manner changed again, and she was once more the woman Molly, the new girl friend of Pedro Mingo. She walked provocatively past the sleeping night clerk and went up the back stairs to reach her room without passing the man who was still watching Mingo's empty room.

The Shadow passed the fire-opal girasol ring through the air above his communications instrument and the machine became silent. For a long minute The Shadow remained

standing in the blue light above the instrument. Then he passed his hand again across the instrument console and a man's voice spoke at once.

"Burbank," the voice said.

"You made the recording of Margo Lane's report?" The Shadow asked.

"Made and filed," Burbank answered from his post in another secret room where he maintained the records of The Shadow's far reaching work against crime, and where he was in constant touch with all agents of The Shadow across the world.

"Shrevvy is waiting?" The Shadow snapped.

"In the office of Lamont Cranston."

"Good."

The Shadow again passed the fire-opal girasol across the humming console and it went silent again. The Shadow turned and glided in swift silence to a blank wall of the hidden room. He touched the wall and vanished through the wall itself. He stood in a narrow corridor. But now it was not The Shadow who stood in the dark corridor. Lamont Cranston smoothed his greying blond hair, returned the garb of The Shadow to its hiding places inside his clothes, and touched the wall of the dark corridor. The wall swung open and Cranston stepped through.

Cranston stood now in his private office high above the city in the Park Avenue office building. The section of bookcase closed silently behind him, sealing off the hidden room of The Shadow. Cranston had made no sound, and the man who sat near Cranston's large desk had not turned to look. Cranston smiled as he observed the small man. Moe Shrevnitz was one of The Shadow's most secret and useful agents. The people who had walked on Queenstanding Place this night would have known him, if they had remembered the taxi driver who had been parked there apparently asleep.

"You have a report to make, Shrevvy?" Cranston said.

Moe Shrevnitz, Shrevvy to The Shadow and his agents, showed no surprise at the sudden appearance of his chief. The small, peppery taxi driver grinned as he turned to face Cranston.

"I sure do, boss," Shrevvy said.

Cranston sat behind his large desk, the skyline of New York spread out below and behind him through his wide office windows, the lights of the city still bright at this late hour. He touched a switch to start the tape recorder inside

his desk. One of the secrets of The Shadow's efficiency against crime was that no report was ever forgotten no matter how unimportant it seemed.

"Go ahead, Shrevvy," Cranston said.

Moe Shrevnitz stood up and walked as he reported. "I parked where I could see both galleries like you told me to. I didn't see anyone go into the Pauli Gallery, and no one came out until you did. But there was a lot of interest on that street in both galleries.

"Two guys were watching from the roof of the Adrian Gallery building. When you came out of the Pauli Gallery, they both left the roof. I saw them cross a couple of roofs, then I didn't see them again. I figure they took one of the fire escapes down into that alley."

"When they saw me?" Cranston asked.

"At the same time boss. I ain't sure that was what made them move, but I'm pretty sure they saw you all right."

"Go on," Cranston said.

"Well, there was this other guy, kind of tall, who was watching from a doorway across the street from both galleries. He just stood there out of sight and didn't move a muscle, not even when he saw you come out of the Pauli Gallery. I figure he saw everything though. Anyway, he stayed put until the cops showed up and went into the Pauli Gallery on the run. Cardona was with them."

"I called and reported the murder," Cranston said. "What else, Shrevvy?"

"The best," Shrevvy said. "When the cops showed up, the guy in the doorway walked over and sort of watched up close. He sneaked inside the Pauli Gallery. He came out pretty fast, and went back to his doorway. When you came out of the Adrian Gallery he was right after you and Stanley. He tailed you, and I tailed him!"

"He followed me?" Cranston said. "I never saw him!"

"He was good, boss, real good. Only not good enough. He didn't spot me after him, and he lost you when you went in the secret door down in the street."

"You mean he lost The Shadow," Cranston said. He had been The Shadow when he had left the car to take the secret elevator up to the hidden room. "Are you sure, Shrevvy?"

Shrevvy nodded. "Yeh, boss. He went right on after the Rolls and Stanley after you had slipped out. It was dark, I never saw The Shadow leave the Rolls myself. You was just part of the dark."

Cranston rubbed his jaw in thought. "So he followed

Cranston, and then Stanley. Presumably he was surprised when Stanley took the car to the garage at my town house and I wasn't in it. He undoubtedly backtracked, but he would find nothing."

"He backtracked all right," Shrevvy said, "and then he spotted me at last. He gave me the slip, boss. I told you he was good."

"A professional," Cranston said. "But who is he, and what was he doing on Queenstanding Place? Who was he watching? Who were they all watching? They could have been watching Kitt, or myself, or the Pauli Gallery. Or they could have been watching the Adrian Gallery."

"There are too many loose ends here, Shrevvy. We have a series of minor art thefts, all Pre-Columbian statues, that had the police baffled. The Shadow became interested when he recognized the MO of Pedro Mingo in the entries. You remember Mingo, Shrevvy. We caught him some years ago in connection with that attempt to wipe out the whole UN with the special cyanide gas. Mingo was used by those plotters for thefts, and he has characteristic entry technique."

"Margo went on the case, gained his confidence, and he led her to Morris Kitt. I discovered that Kitt was an exconvict, released only a year ago from a sentence for art theft. That was all I discovered, except that Kitt visited the Adrian Gallery from time to time, until last night. Now Kitt is dead."

"Maybe the statue business was just a coverup," Shrevvy said. "Maybe he was in something that meant a lot more cash in the bank."

"Perhaps, but then Mingo..." Cranston began, and stopped. The hooded eyes of the wealthy socialite flashed suddenly with the fire of The Shadow. Cranston sat up in his chair behind the large desk. "Cash! That's it, Shrevvy. Kitt paid Mingo in cash and in advance. For five thefts, six counting last night. Where did he get that money? He apparently sold none of the statues. What was Kitt's source?"

"Was it a lot of money, boss?" Shrevvy said.

"I don't know, Shrevvy, but it's time I found out."

"You want me to drive you to Mingo's?"

Cranston shook his head. "No, Shrevvy, you must never be connected to Lamont Cranston or The Shadow. Go out the secret way down the private elevator. Return to your post at the Adrian Gallery. I'll take another taxi, the Rolls Royce would attract too much attention in that district."

Shrevvy put on his old leather cap and stepped through

the opened bookcase into the narrow corridor behind the wall of the private office. The bookcase closed silently behind him. Lamont Cranston turned and walked from his private office. In his outer suite of offices the desks were neat and deserted in the dark, the empty chairs like grey ghosts in the faint light through the windows. The clock on the wall read two o'clock. Only two short hours since the death of Morris Kitt.

On Park Avenue Cranston hailed a passing taxi, its top light visible far down the avenue long before it reached him. The lights were still on in the giant buildings that lined the broad avenue with its grass divider in the center. Chrome and glass glistened with light through the city, the night world awake and moving. The taxi driver eager at this late hour for a fare, drove off quickly toward Chelsea and the shabby hotel where Pedro Mingo hid now in the room of the woman he called Molly. In the taxi, as it passed through the darkened theater district and turned south on Ninth Avenue, Cranston thought again about Morris Kitt and his source of money. Cash and in advance. A small-time thief and exconvict, only recently out of prison, who stole statues he could not sell and paid his confederate in cash. Kitt must have a source of cash, perhaps someone behind the scenes pulling the strings. A source, an unknown someone, who had certainly killed him.

The taxi pulled up before a dirty, grubby hotel of six stories. The entrance was old and worn, stone columns that had once been white were now grey and stained with age. Garbage cans stood in front and at the side of the shabby building in an alley. The taxi driver seemed surprised at the contrast between where he had picked up Cranston and where they were now, but, in the manner of New York taxi drivers, he took his money and roared away without a word and without looking back to where Cranston stood alone on the sidewalk. Cranston walked into the shabby hotel.

The night clerk was awake now, and yawning. A tall, thin man, the clerk leered at Cranston when the socialite asked for the room of Molly Bader. Cranston ignored the clerk and walked up the stairs. He moved cautiously, but the stranger was no longer watching at the head of the stairs. Cranston moved quickly past Mingo's room and around the corner to the door of the room where Margo was keeping Pedro Mingo. He knocked softly—two long, a short, and a long.

The door did not open. Inside the room there was no sound.

Cranston came alert. He listened. Nothing moved inside the room. He knocked once more with the private signal. Even the super-keen hearing of The Shadow detected nothing moving inside the silent room. Cranston took out his ring of special keys and inserted a key in the lock. The door opened silently and he stepped inside.

The light shone directly into his eyes as it went on.

He saw a hand. The hand projected into the light from behind the small desk lamp. The hand held a small pistol pointed straight at Cranston.

"Close the door! Quick!"

The voice was harsh and low.

"Quick!"

Cranston closed the door.

6

THE LIGHT shined into his eyes. The man stood behind the light across the room, only his hand and the small pistol visible. Even with his night vision learned in the Orient, Cranston could see no more than a vague shape behind the light.

"Three steps! Now!"

Cranston took three steps toward the indistinct figure. He watched the figure intently, strained to see through the glare of the light. He noted every detail he could make out. The figure was thin, slender. Not tall, but the man could be crouched. The pistol in the left hand was a Beretta from the look of it. Now he saw that it was silenced. On the hand, the left hand, there was a small scar livid on the trigger finger.

"Turn around. Quick!"

Cranston turned around. There was a sound of quick movement. He tensed his trained muscles to take the blow and roll with it. But there was no blow. He felt a hand near his head and then the light was gone. He stood in darkness. A bag had been dropped over his head.

"Clasp your hands behind your neck! Now!"

Cranston did as he was told. There was more movement in the room. Cranston strained his ears. He heard the lock turn. The man had locked the door. A chair scraped. Hands pulled him down, and he found himself seated in a chair. Through all this one thought went insistently through his mind—*the man had had the bag ready.*

"Empty your pockets! On the table!"

Cranston emptied his pockets. He reached out to feel the edge of the table, then emptied his pockets and placed the contents on the table: keys, money, penknife, matches, handkerchief, checkbook, wallet. There was a long silence and sounds of his possessions being examined. Then he felt the man close to him. A quick hand searched his clothes with the deft touch of an expert. The man would have found anything Cranston had tried to hold back except the black garb of The Shadow that was undetectable in its secret pockets. He was glad that this time he had not come armed. His captor moved away again.

"Hands on the table. Flat!"

Cranston placed his hands flat on the bare table unseen in front of him. The bag was some special material, not a ray of light filtered through. He sat in total darkness with his hands flat on the table. He sensed the cool and efficient stranger sitting across the table and watching him.

"Very well," the cold and deadly voice said. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to visit the young woman who lives in this room. What have you done with her?" Cranston demanded.

Something hard, heavy, smashed down on the fingers of his left hand. Cranston cried out in pain. The man had hit his hand with the pistol. The cry of pain was partly real and partly feigned. Real because in the dark with the bag over his head the blow was a surprise. Feigned because his years of training nerves and muscles under the mystic teaching of Chen T'a Tze had given his mind the power to rise above the momentary pain of the body, the power to have his body feel little pain even under the most severe infliction. *The mind can do anything with the body*, The Master had said, *if the mind believes*. The blow was a surprise, and with his instantaneous reflexes Cranston made his cry of pain louder than it really was to make his captor think he felt great pain.

"I ask the questions," the cold voice said. "You answer. Why are you here? Are you one of them? Answer!"

"I came to visit the woman," Cranston said, his teeth clamped together to feign the pain he no longer felt at all.

"There was no woman," the voice said.

"A woman and a man," Cranston said. "They should be here."

"Why would a wealthy and important man come calling on the kind of woman who lives in this place?"

Cranston tensed. The most clever men made such glaring errors. This man knew who he was! He was indentified in his papers in his wallet, but the papers did not tell the man that Lamont Cranston was wealthy and important.

"I have my reason for being here," Cranston said, "As I am sure you have your reasons."

The gun smashed against his left hand again. Cranston cried out, prepared this time for the blow and cringing in the chair in pretended pain. The unseen man neither laughed nor sneered. Cranston's captor took no pleasure in inflicting pain, neither did his voice show trace of guilt or reluctance at inflicting pain. The man smashed Cranston's hand coldly and efficiently as other men performed the necessary routine of their work.

"I ask the questions," the steady voice said. "Who is the small man? Why are you after him?"

"You wouldn't be here if you didn't know that," Cranston said.

"You tell me!"

Cranston felt the pistol poised again above his hand. He pretended to shrink away from the impending blow.

"An unimportant thief," he said quickly. "His name is Pedro Mingo."

"Why do you want him?"

"He and another man were involved in a series of thefts."

"Thefts?"

"Art thefts," Cranston said.

"You are a policeman?"

"No, I sometimes work for a friend. I have access to art circles and I could help in this case."

"Why did you kill the other man?"

"I did not kill him."

"You were seen leaving the Pauli Gallery. The man, Kitt, was dead in the gallery," the voice said coldly.

This unseen man had seen him leave the Pauli Gallery. Then the man had to be either one of them on the roof of the Adrian Gallery or the man in the doorway whom Shrev-

vy had reported as following Cranston. And this deadly man he could not see did not appear to know about Mingo, Kitt or the thefts. Then what was his part in the whole thing?

"I did not kill Kitt. Someone else did," Cranston said.

"Why? Who was this Kitt?"

"I don't know why," Cranston said. "Kitt was only a small thief, an exconvict."

"Who is the man in black?" the deadly voice asked.

So the man had seen The Shadow. Cranston pretended an eager surprise.

"So you saw him too?" Cranston said as if he, too, had seen The Shadow and had not really believed what he had seen. And then he said, "I wasn't sure I had seen him. He must have been the one who killed Kitt!"

This time there was a long silence in the room. Cranston sensed, felt, that the deadly stranger was staring at him and thinking hard. The bluff Cranston had made, the suggestion that he thought The Shadow could have been the killer of Morris Kitt, seemed to be working. The stranger must have had the same thought. A bluff, to be effective, must strike a response. The way, in a poker game, to bluff that you have four aces when you do not you must find your victim already believing that you *might* have four aces. The unseen captor had already thought that the mysterious black figure he had seen might be the killer of Kitt.

Unless it was all an act. Unless this whole interrogation was a carefully planned ruse to deceive Cranston, and his unseen captor was himself the real killer of Morris Kitt! This man had been waiting in the room of Pedro Mingo. Perhaps the stranger knew much more about Kitt and Mingo than it seemed. If he did not know who Mingo was, how had he found this room, and why had he come? The killer of Morris Kitt might very much want to find Pedro Mingo. On the other hand he could have followed Mingo.

Cranston sensed the man move again. The man was standing.

"Why was Kitt killed?"

"Perhaps he was part of the gang," Cranston said. "They had an argument over the loot."

"The gang?" the voice said warily.

"Yes, the gang of art thieves! It's logical."

"So?" the cold voice said.

Again there was silence in the room, and again Cranston felt the man was staring at him. Cranston's sham at being no

more than an eager amateur detective on the trail of some minor art thieves could be convincing the unseen questioner. The man's voice was still low and deadly when he spoke again, but now there was a hint of caution and doubt.

"What connection did this Kitt have to the Adrian Gallery?" the voice said carefully.

Cranston continued his act of the eager detective. "They must be buying the stolen art! That fits. You must have seen Kitt going into the Adrian the same as I did."

There was a pause. Then the low, cold voice said, "That is why you were in the Adrian Gallery? To look for stolen art?"

"Yes," Cranston lied.

But his mind was not thinking about stolen art now. This unseen man had been in the Adrian Gallery tonight! Then perhaps the man was no stranger to him. The man knew who he was. And yet Cranston did not recognize the voice. A man who could have two voices so different that even the ears of The Shadow could not connect them was not an amateur in his work. This man was an expert. An expert in something far bigger and more deadly than the theft of small works of art. And if this unseen questioner really did not know about Mingo, Kitt, and the thefts, then he had not been watching them, *he had been watching the Adrian Gallery!*

Now Cranston remembered some of the first words of his unseen interrogator. *Are you one of them?* And he remembered the tone of the man's voice when Cranston had suggested that The Shadow was part of *the gang*. A wary tone, unsure, as if not sure just what gang Cranston meant. *Them! The gang*. And Cranston knew that *them* was not Mingo and Kitt, and *the gang* was some other gang than a gang of art thieves! This man was interested in some other gang, and this other gang was, somehow, connected to the Adrian Gallery.

The man had told Cranston far more than he knew. And perhaps the deadly stranger had suddenly realized this. He did not speak again. Cranston heard movement. The stranger was moving toward him. Cranston tensed to spring when the man reached him around the table.

There was a light tapping sound. The sound of fingers tapping glass. Cranston felt the stranger pause somewhere in the room. The tapping on glass could only be a warning of some kind. The man who had interrogated him took a quick

step toward him. The gun smashed against the side of his head. Cranston rolled with the blow and fell to the floor as if knocked unconscious. The blow would have rendered an ordinary man senseless, and the stranger did not pause to make sure that Cranston was indeed unconscious. There was the sound of feet going away, the sound of the window opening, and then silence.

Cranston leaped to his feet. He tore off the bag over his head. The room was pitch dark. Cranston crossed quickly to the single window. Below in the side alley two figures were just disappearing around the corner and into the street in front of the hotel. Something had scared them away. But the man who had questioned him would have had time to kill him. Whoever these men were, they would not hesitate to kill, of that Cranston was sure. He was also sure that the only thing that had saved him was that whatever they were after was too important for them to risk being involved in a murder.

Or was it? Where were Margo and Pedro Mingo? Perhaps it had been only Cranston's importance, his friendship with Commissioner Weston, that had made them not kill him.

Cranston turned from the window and the fire escape and switched on the light. His keen eyes searched the room quickly. There was no sign of violence and no sign of a note from Margo. The closet was empty except for some of the clothes Margo wore in her impersonation of Molly Bader. There was no trace of Margo or Pedro Mingo.

Cranston was worried. He must find Margo. He walked to the table to pick up the contents of his pockets that he had placed on the table. As he began to return the material to his pockets he suddenly stopped. He looked at the things that lay on the table. The keys were there, and the wallet and checkbook. The matches and the handkerchief and the pen knife. But his money was gone!

His money! Why would the strangers want his money? No more than a few hundred dollars, and they did not seem like men who would bother to steal a few hundred dollars. He was sure that at the end, after the lightly tapped warning on the window, the cold-voiced interrogator would not have stopped to pick up a few dollars. Then when had he taken the money, and why? Early, at the start, before he had questioned Cranston. The man had taken the money! Why . . . ?

There was a crash and a splintering of wood and metal

and the door of the small hotel room burst open. Cranston whirled.

Three men burst into the room. One stood at the door. One dashed to the left behind a chair. The third jumped to the right, crouched low and with a short, snub-nosed pistol trained on Cranston.

"Hold it right there!" the man with the pistol barked, the pistol never wavering an inch from Cranston.

Now Cranston knew what the tapping on the window had been a warning of. The man with the pistol was stocky and swarthy and Cranston knew him well. Detective Joe Cardona of the New York Police.

"Just get your hands up!" Cardona barked again.

The man in the doorway was also a New York policeman whom Cranston recognized but not by name. The third man who was behind the chair on the left was a stranger to Cranston. This third man now stood up and looked at Cranston.

"That's him, Cardona. He's our killer. Get him out into a better light," the stranger said.

Cranston stepped into the light of the small table lamp. Cardona stared at him and began to swear.

"Damn it, Lamont Cranston!" Cardona said.

"You know him Cardona?" the stranger said.

Cardona nodded. "Sure I do, he's a friend of the Commissioner. He ain't no killer, Ralston."

"I don't care who he's a friend of, he was the man who came out of the Pauli Gallery tonight. I saw him, and I followed him."

So the stranger had been the man in the doorway. Then the other two had been the ones on the roof. Cranston studied the stranger now. He was tall and slender.

Cardona was unhappy. "He's got to have a good reason, right Cranston?"

"Damn it, Cardona," the stranger, whom Cardona had called Ralston, exploded, "we lost Kitt and this man was there when he died!"

"Tell us what's going on, Cranston," Cardona said.

Cranston now had to use the story prepared for such an emergency. He never appeared in a criminal case without a "cover" story. The work of The Shadow had to remain hidden, his work and mysterious powers known to only a few trusted agents.

"The Robbery Squad had a peculiar series of art rob-

beries," Cranston explained. "The Commissioner mentioned them to me. As you know, Cardona, I am well known in art circles, and the Robbery men thought I could use my connection to help them solve the robberies."

"Art circles?" the tall man, Ralston, said. "But the Pauli Gallery was closed."

"I had reason to think an attempt would be made to rob it," Cranston said, and then asked, "How did it happen that you came here?"

Cardona said, "Ralston there backtracked on you. He remembered that your car had slowed down at a Park Avenue building so he staked it out. He spotted you coming out, and followed you here. Then he called us and waited. I guess I should have recognized his description of you, Cranston, but this case has me going crazy, and now we've lost Kitt."

Cranston studied the tall, slender Ralston. The man was a highly skilled follower. Twice now Cranston had failed to detect the man following him. And Ralston had backtracked after losing him and still picked him up later. That took ability and a great deal of training and practice. Cardona had not said who Ralston was.

"Then you weren't after Mingo?" Cranston said.

"You mean Pedro Mingo?" Cardona said, "Was he in on this?"

"Kitt's partner for the robberies," Cranston said.

"Perhaps you had better explain about these robberies, Mr. Cranston," Ralston said.

Cranston explained about the peculiar robberies of Pre-Columbian art, and the involvement of Kitt and Mingo. He knew almost at once that neither Cardona nor Ralston knew about the robberies. This was not surprising. While the Robbery Squad was working on the thefts, they did not yet know about Kitt and Mingo. Only The Shadow and his agents knew of the involvement of those two men. The Shadow worked alone until a case was solved, and it was only tonight that the Avenger had caught Kitt and Mingo in the act.

"So that's what he's been up to," Cardona said. "I should have guessed. Robbery is part of his record."

"We were too busy with our own matter. We weren't looking for robberies," Ralston said. "You think Mingo killed Kitt, Cranston? A fight over the loot?"

"No, I don't," Cranston said. "I said the robberies were peculiar. One of the peculiarities was that the stolen objects were very special and almost unsaleable. They have not been seen anywhere since stolen."

"Then who did kill Kitt?" Ralston said.

"Perhaps you can tell me," Cranston said. "If you did not know about the robberies, why were you interested in Morris Kitt?"

"I'm afraid I can't tell you that," Ralston said.

Cardona put his pistol away now. "Washington likes to keep things secret, Cranston."

"Washington?" Cranston said. "Then Ralston is an FBI man?"

"No, Cranston," Ralston said. "I'm a Treasury Agent, and that's all I can tell you. I think we better all leave here and you can forget we ever mentioned anything."

A Treasury Agent. A T-Man, and Ralston was not interested in Morris Kitt or Pedro Mingo for the art thefts. Cardona and Ralston and the Treasury Department were after Kitt for some other reason. And they were not the only ones after Kitt. It was clear to Cranston now that the man Margo had seen in the hall watching Mingo's room had not been a policeman, although Margo had felt that he was. The man had almost certainly been one of the two men on the roof of the Adrian Gallery tonight. Either the deadly voiced man himself or his partner. And the man who had questioned him had taken his money!

"Counterfeiting," Cranston said.

Ralston almost jumped. "What?"

"Counterfeiting, that has to be it, right?" Cranston said. "Morris Kitt was involved with a counterfeiting operation. That was where he got the money to pay Mingo in advance and in cash!"

And that was why the cold-voiced stranger had taken Cranston's money—to see if it could be counterfeit! The stranger and his partner were also on the trail of the counterfeiting gang. Who were they? Margo thought they were policemen, but neither Ralston nor Cardona had mentioned any other police in the case. But whoever they were, they were after the counterfeiters, and they had been watching the Adrian Gallery!

Ralston and Cardona looked at each other now. Ralston was grim as he faced Cranston.

"All right, Cranston, I think we had all better go down to headquarters and talk to the Commissioner. And I mean now!"

"At this hour?" Cranston said. "The Commissioner will be asleep."

Cranston was thinking of Margo and Pedro Mingo. Margo could be in grave danger, and The Shadow wanted to find her at once. Ralston swore.

"Then we'll wake him up. Call him, Cardona. Damn it, Cranston, this isn't just a simple gang of counterfeiters, this is the biggest operation we ever came across! They play rough, and I have to know where we stand!"

"I am aware of how rough they play," Cranston said.

Only then did Detective Joe Cardona notice Cranston's left hand. Both Cardona and Ralston stared at the cut and bleeding hand, the bones of two fingers broken and smashed.

"We can stop at the hospital on the way, Cranston," Ralston said.

Cranston agreed, although his broken hand gave him no pain. The powers given to him by The Master in the Orient resisted all pain, and secret ointments passed on by Chen T'a Tze would heal the hand quickly. But the bones had to be set, and Cranston did not want even the T-men to guess the secrets of The Shadow.

7

AN HOUR later, his hand set and bandaged, Lamont Cranston sat in the office of Commissioner Weston and listened to the three men talk. Weston, dragged from sleep, sat behind his desk, his distinguished iron grey hair still ruffled from sleep. Cardona smoked as they all watched Ralston pace the room. Cranston remained silent, his eyes quiet and hooded in his immobile face. But behind his impassive mask his mind was working on the major problem—why had Morris Kitt stolen the art works, and what was the connection between the thefts and the counterfeiting ring?

"Kitt was an engraver, Lamont," Weston was saying. "It

wasn't too well known because his arrests had always been for theft."

"He was a good engraver," Ralston said as he paced the room, "not the best, but good. We had a file on him, but we'd never convicted him for counterfeiting. As far as we know he only made one set of plates years ago until this new stuff started turning up."

Cardona laughed. "Seems like the guy thought he was some kind of an artist, used to send his engravings to the galleries and magazines even from prison."

"He wasn't bad as a matter of fact," Ralston, the T-man, said. "He always seemed to feel he had too much talent to waste on counterfeiting plates, and we were surprised when this new stuff began to show up. They must have made him a good deal to get him to make new plates."

Weston looked at the silent Cranston. "Perhaps you better start at the beginning, Ralston. Lamont might know something we don't know if he hears all the facts."

Ralston nodded and continued to pace the large, elegant office of the Police Commissioner. The Treasury Agent spoke in hard, clipped accents without pause or reference to notes, as if the story were engraved on his mind.

"About a year and a half ago a great deal of counterfeit money began turning up all over the world—here, in England, France, Italy, The Netherlands, you name it. The stuff is first rate, some even better than first rate. There were two peculiarities about it the experts in our department spotted after a while.

"First, in all countries the pattern of passing, and the engraving work itself, *was the same*. Some of the bills in almost all countries were clearly the work of the same engravers! The volume is enormous in all countries, and the bills are not large. Both things mean a big operation because small bills mean less immediate profit, most counterfeiters make only large bills.

"Second, the money in almost every country was of *uneven quality*. This means the work of more than one engraver! In fact, our experts have detected at least three different engravers making the plates. That's something we never ran into before. Good counterfeit engravers are hard to find, but this outfit has at least three!

"Everything points to a very large organization functioning in almost every country. That is bad enough to scare us, but

the thing that really bothers us is one of the engravers. As I said, all the work is good, but some of the bills are so good it's frightening. Our experts can't even be sure they've spotted all the work of this engraver, it's that good. They say even they could be fooled by it, and that is a Treasury nightmare!

"To make it far worse, we do not recognize the work! Until four months ago we could not identify any of the engravers. Then some American bills started showing that struck a memory in one of our experts. They were good, but not as good as the really fine stuff. It took us a while to track down the man in our files, as I said, Kitt hadn't worked on phony money in years.

"Well, we finally identified these bills as Kitt's work. We found he'd only gotten out of prison this year. It was clear that the gang had picked him up to work for them. You see, U.S. money is about the hardest in the world to counterfeit. I suppose they wanted to produce more, so needed more American plates. It takes time and hard work to produce good plates, a lot of time.

"They probably figured Kitt was a fair risk since we'd never arrested him for counterfeiting, and his one set of plates had been made so long ago. Anyway, with the size of their operation, they must have a lot of presses running, and Kitt was an expert on production as well as an engraver. Good production men, and engravers who will do the work, don't grow on trees. I expect they felt they had to risk it."

Cardona snorted. "Lucky for us they did. If crooks didn't make any mistakes we'd never catch them."

Cranston was listening carefully to the recital. So far he had heard nothing that gave him a clue to the reason for the art thefts. The thefts seemed ridiculous, even stupid, for a man in Morris Kitt's position. A gang of the size Ralston was describing would have paid Kitt well. Then why steal almost worthless art? Ralston continued to pace as he talked.

"Up until we spotted Kitt's work, we had no lead at all. We can't trace the distribution, we can't pinpoint the source, and no one had come up with any lead to where the stuff was being made. But spotting Kitt's work gave us something to go on. We knew Kitt usually operated in New York. I came up here and contacted Commissioner Weston, and Cardona and I started looking for Kitt."

Cardona lighted a fresh cigarette where he sat in the far corner of the elegant office of The Commissioner.

"It wasn't easy to find Kitt, let me tell you," Cardona said.

"I checked out everywhere he was known to go, and nothing! I'd begun to figure he wasn't working out of New York at all this time. I never figured on checking out Robbery Squad, you know? I mean, it didn't make sense he'd be stealing when he was engraving!"

Cranston spoke for the first time since Ralston had started his story.

"No," Cranston said, "it doesn't make sense."

And there was the problem. It did not make sense that Kitt would steal while working for the counterfeiters. And yet he had! That was the peculiar part. There was nothing very peculiar about how hard it had been to find Kitt. The Shadow himself had only found Kitt tonight, and then only through Margo's inside work with Pedro Mingo. Cardona and Ralston had not known about Mingo.

"We still don't know where Kitt was holed up," Cardona said, "but I spotted him late last week. We put a twenty-four-hour tail on him, but he gave us the slip a couple of times. We spotted him going in that Adrian Gallery a couple of times. We checked and found out they have some of his art engravings at the Adrian. Tonight Ralston there followed him to the block of the Adrian but lost him again."

"I staked out across the street," Ralston explained. "I was really watching the Adrian. There were two men on the roof I didn't recognize, and then Cranston there came out of the Pauli Gallery. I didn't pay much attention at the time, I didn't know Cranston, and I didn't know Kitt was in the Pauli stealing. But when Cardona and his men came roaring up to the Pauli, I went over to investigate..."

Cranston now stopped listening. He knew the rest of Ralston's activities that night from Shrevvy's report. Cranston thought about the Adrian Gallery. Kitt had been seen entering the Adrian, Kitt had been killed, and The Shadow was sure that the killer had vanished through the coal chute into the Adrian Gallery! The two strange men on the roof had been watching the Adrian Gallery, he was certain of that. And they had not known about the art thefts, or about Kitt being an engraver. There were *two trails* in the case. One that had led Ralston and The Shadow to Morris Kitt. And a second that had led the strangers to the Adrian Gallery. He knew the first trail, but not the second. What had led the deadly voiced man to the Adrian Gallery if it had not been Kitt?

Cardona was talking, "...he must have died within sec-

onds. After we got that anonymous call, we got over there fast, and he was already cold. Medical Examiner says it was some kind of nerve poison, a *curare* type but new to the ME. Shot into him by a kind of needle. We didn't find the weapon, but there was a piece of hollow glass in the wound. My guess would be some kind of air gun, but it could have been a hypodermic up close, or a bow and arrow for all I know."

"A weapon for spies," Cranston said. "Silent and close range and instantaneous. A spy's type of weapon. You said the gang operates all over the world, Ralston?"

"I did," Ralston said.

Cranston stood up. In the quiet of the early morning hour in the Commissioner's fine office, his hooded eyes glinted for an instant with a hint of the power of The Shadow.

"We know now why Morris Kitt was killed," Cranston said grimly as he stood there in the quiet office. "To prevent him leading us to the counterfeit gang."

"You think they knew the Treasury Department was after him, Lamont?" Commissioner Weston asked.

"Perhaps, Commissioner," Cranston said.

Ralston swore softly. "I'm sure he never spotted us, and I don't think anyone else did."

"You could be right," Cranston said, remembering how skilled Ralston was at trailing a man.

"Then why be afraid of Kitt?" Commissioner Weston said, "if they hadn't guessed the Treasury men were on to him?"

"I think because of the robberies, Commissioner," Cranston said slowly. "I think his robberies scared them, he could be caught and might have talked. Or it could simply have been that they were afraid the robberies would draw too much attention to Kitt."

"Then why did he do the robberies, Lamont?" Weston asked.

"I don't know," Cranston admitted.

There was a long silence in the fine office as each man sat with his own thoughts. Cardona seemed puzzled. Commissioner Weston furrowed his brow in thought. Ralston paced, his face bitter and discouraged.

"Whatever made them kill him, the result was the same," Ralston said. "It stops us cold. Kitt was our only lead to the gang!"

"What about the Adrian Gallery?" Commissioner Weston asked.

"We'll watch it," Ralston said, "but I don't see its connection. Kitt had engravings on display there."

"On top of that, Kitt's record shows he knew Avis Adrian from years ago, even before she married Adrian," Cardona said. "Maybe she's tied into the robberies, but nothing else."

Lamont Cranston said nothing. He had his own thoughts about the Adrian Gallery, and he had the advantage of suspecting that the killer of Morris Kitt had escaped into the Adrian. But he could not tell them that. Only The Shadow knew where the killer had gone. And The Shadow had work to do.

"If that's all, Commissioner, I think we could all use some sleep. It's been a long night," Cranston said.

The Commissioner nodded. "I think that's all, Lamont. But since you are now involved, I don't think Ralston would object to your continuing to help on the case. Perhaps you can find out something by being inside the Adrian Gallery."

"I'll do my best, Commissioner," Cranston said as he left the room.

Weston held Ralston and Cardona in the office for a moment as Cranston walked down the hall and took the elevator down to the street. The wealthy socialite looked up and down the dark late night street.

A long black car materialized and rolled up to the curb in front of him. It was his own Rolls Royce. Stanley opened the rear door. Cranston slid quickly inside. Then he saw her there.

"Margo! I was worried."

The beautiful, dark-haired agent of The Shadow sat there in the rear seat still wearing the cheap and gaudy clothes of her assumed role.

"They searched his room, and then that one watching must have guessed what I'd done, Lamont," Margo explained. "I heard them coming toward my room. The door was locked, and we had time to go down the fire escape. They weren't police, Lamont."

"I know, Margo," Cranston said, and told her about his experience with the deadly voiced stranger.

He also told her everything he had now learned about the giant counterfeiting ring.

"It's now more important than ever that I talk with Mingo," Cranston said. "Where do you have him?"

"I was afraid I would lose him, Lamont, he was afraid of

his shadow after those men almost caught us. So I called Stanley for help. We took him to the secret room. Stanley drugged him first, of course."

Cranston leaned forward toward the front seat. "To the room, Stanley."

"Lamont," Margo said, "he's so frightened now that I don't think you could make him talk even if he knows anything. I think The Shadow will have to question him. He needs something to fear more than the killers of Kitt."

"Very well, Margo," Cranston agreed.

In the back seat he sat back in silence as Stanley drove fast toward the Park Avenue office building. It had been a long night, as he had told Weston, but The Shadow could not sleep yet. When they reached the building, it was The Shadow who glided out and melted into the darkness of the city night.

Pedro Mingo shivered in the blue light. The small thief shook where he sat alone in the room that seemed to have no walls and to be lighted from nowhere. The room itself seemed to glow with the dim bluish light. Since he had awakened from his drugged stupor over an hour ago, the small man had not moved. He sat frozen in terror. Only his eyes moved, searched the blue gloom. He saw nothing. There were only deep black shadows in the dim blue room.

One of the black shadows moved.

Mingo cried out in horror and fear.

"Do not be afraid, Pedro," an eerie voice said.

The small thief moaned like a trapped animal. His terror-struck eyes searched for escape. His lips shivered.

"I will not harm you this time, Pedro," the voice of The Shadow said. "I only want information. You are safe here as long as I protect you."

Mingo closed his eyes as if that would save him. He hunched in his seat like a small boy afraid of the wrath of the darkness.

"I want to know who killed Morris Kitt and why," The Shadow's voice insisted. "Here you are safe. If you tell me I will keep you safe."

Mingo sat hunched, his eyes closed. "How do I know you can? Maybe it's a trick."

"Look at me, Pedro!" the chilling voice commanded.

Mingo opened his eyes slowly and looked. A face and two

burning eyes floated above him in the blue light. From a source unseen a thin beam of light illuminated the face beneath a wide-brimmed slouch hat. The hawk nose jutted beneath the furrowed brow and piercing eyes. Below his face The Shadow's black cloak swept away and blended into the gloom of the room. The only other light in the room came from the glowing red stone on The Shadow's finger, the fire-opal girasol handed down to him from The Master.

"Do you believe I can save you?" The Shadow demanded.

Mingo nodded, his eyes caught by the gaze of The Shadow, his face staring up, transfixed.

"I believe you," Mingo said. "Only I don't know nothin'."

"You do not know who killed Kitt or why?"

"No. I don't know nothin' about Kitt. I knew him in the old days, and he looked me up for the statue jobs. I got paid to open up the places like always. To help out, and that's all."

"You must know his friends, his associates?" The Shadow said.

"No! I didn't even know where he lived. He called me. He planned the jobs. That's all!"

The small thief was shaking again where he sat in the macabre bluish light of the secret room. His eyes had widened, and moved in terror.

"He sold the statues to someone! Who?"

"I don't know!"

"Where did he get the money to pay you if he did not sell the statues?"

"I don't know! I don't know!" Mingo cried.

The Shadow moved closer, his chilling voice hammering at the small man.

"Why only those Pre-Columbian statues?"

"He was a nut! I don't know, only I think he just wanted them. You should of seen how he looked at them! He just wanted them. Yeh! I remember. Once he laughed at me when I asked him who the hell would buy that junk, lousy hunks of clay! He laughed. He said I was too dumb to understand. He said no one would see them again except him! Yeh, I remember! He was a nut. What did I care? I got paid!"

The Shadow watched the shaking thief. The fear in Mingo's voice left little doubt that he was telling the truth. The words had come rushing out, vomited forth by terror, the

need to speak, to have something to tell. The small man had remembered one incident, but it was enough for The Shadow. It told much. Morris Kitt had been a collector, a self-deluded lover of art, of Pre-Columbian art. Kitt imagined himself an artist in engraving, and a collector of Pre-Columbian statues. That explained the stupid robberies—Kitt had been pushed by a compulsion! He had to steal the statues.

"You were paid, Pedro, but the money is probably useless," The Shadow said mockingly.

"What?" Mingo croaked. "What?"

"Kitt worked for a counterfeiting ring! Most of the money he gave you will be false money!" The Shadow said.

"Phony money? I..."

Mingo stopped. The small man shivered again, trembled there in the blue and hidden room above the city. The Shadow moved even closer, looming like a great black hawk above the thief.

"Tell me!"

"No! I...I can't! I..."

"Tell me!" The Shadow commanded, his voice low and cold and sharp as a sword.

Mingo trembled. "I...I think he was afraid of them, yeh. He was afraid of something. Always hiding. I couldn't ever call him. Always looking around like he expected something to get him."

"Something did get him, Pedro!" The Shadow hissed.

"Yeh," Mingo said, and he blinked in the gloom. "I ain't sure, only he was real scared of something. He said something about the worst he'd known, yeh, the coldest person he ever knew. And somethin' about a guy named Wolf. Maybe they was the same."

"Wolf?" The Shadow demanded. "Wolf who?"

"I don't know! Maybe it wasn't nothin', he just talked once about some guy named Wolf. Only he talked like he thought a lot of this Wolf, not like he was scared."

"Who was he afraid of?"

"I don't know!"

"Was it this Wolf?"

"No, I don't know, I can't think!"

"You're lying! Think, Pedro!"

"There was a foreigner! Someone was a foreigner!"

"What kind of foreigner? Was it the man named Wolf?"

Mingo shook like a thin leaf in a cold, chilling wind. The

small thief hunched again, his eyes rolling in all directions.

"I don't know!"

"Where was Kitt working?"

"I don't know!"

"Tell me about the Adrian Gallery!"

"I ain't never heard of it!"

"Kitt went in there many times!"

"I don't know nothin' more! Stop it! Stop!"

"Who was Kitt afraid of?"

"I don't know! I'm scared! They'll get me! I didn't do nothin'! I..."

Mingo choked, coughed. There was a low rattle in his throat. His hands went up to his eyes. He seemed to sway. Hunched there in the chair he swayed, paled, his eyes wide. Then he fell from the chair and lay on the floor huddled into a terrified ball.

The Shadow looked down at the small thief. Then the great black figure bent down. Mingo had fainted, no more. Sheer terror had finally reached the impossible stage and Mingo had collapsed. The Shadow stood up and glided through the blue light to his communications instrument. He passed the glowing girasol across the instrument. The console began to hum.

"Stanley, you will come in and take Pedro Mingo to the police. I have clouded his mind, he will not remember this room. Tell the police he simply came looking for Lamont Cranston. That will be believed."

"Yes, Boss," Stanley's voice said from the instrument.

"Margo will resume her role as Lamont Cranston's secretary, and have Burbank search the past of Morris Kitt for a man named Wolf, any foreigners, and anyone else he may have known."

"Right away, Boss."

In the dim blue room The Shadow's eyes burned with thought. Outside in the city a grey dawn was beginning to break in the hot summer day. The Shadow would return to the Adrian Gallery. But even The Shadow needed sleep.

A few moments later Lamont Cranston left the Park Avenue building and was driven home to his town house just as the sun began to rise above the low buildings and the river to the east. Another day, and already the heat was rising from the streets. It was going to be a good day, hot but bright and sunny. Perhaps it would be the last day for the killer of Morris Kitt.

8

THROUGH the long, hot day the city shone like burnished bronze under the bright sun. A giant city like New York makes its own climate, and it took the sun and warmth of a glorious summer day and transformed them into a thick, fetid, airless interior of a man-made oven. The streets and the buildings grew hot to the touch, and the never-resting people mopped the sweat that poured from them, gasped for some breath of air, and had no time to see the beauty of the sun and warmth. Summer in New York is not a time of beauty, it is a time when nerves wear thin, tempers flair, and when night comes murder often lurks no more than a hair away in the airless rooms and streets.

Night brings darkness to New York, if not relief in summer. The heat, held by the miles of concrete and asphalt, radiates far into the stifling night. The day people, released at last from the rushing of necessity, hide in the air-conditioned taverns, the cool movie houses, or drink cool drinks motionless before their television sets. In the slums they, the day people, sit on fire escapes or out on chairs on the sidewalk in search of some faint movement of the thick air. The day people talk of the heat and hope that they will find some sleep before morning and the time to move again.

The night people go on as usual. In the secret world of the city night neither heat nor cold brings change.

At the Adrian Gallery it was the second day of Turhan Kemel's show. On this second day there were still drinks offered, but now the time of serious business had arrived, and the people who came talked not in color and form but in dollars and future value. Hubert Adrian still moved from group to group, but now the tall gallery owner talked more seriously, urging the value of Turhan Kemel's work. The Turk himself studied his paintings to see if perhaps he could reduce the prices to sell more. Avis Adrian laughed with men who might buy, and the assistant, Penelope Drake, worked long and carefully noting the names and addresses of all who came to view the paintings.

In the cellar of the Adrian Gallery nothing moved. The cellar was cool and pleasant, dark and silent. Air-conditioned and climate controlled to protect and store the paintings not on display, the large cellar was divided into many small rooms each with its own climate and temperature control. In each small room crates of paintings stood stacked on walk boards to raise them above the floor. To the rear there was one larger room where empty crates were piled to the ceiling and leaned against each other. At the far end of this larger room a small opening led into the unused coal room.

It was in this larger room that there was now movement.

From the heavy shadows a tall figure appeared, emerged. The figure was indistinct, as black as the shadows themselves, and as silent. The figure moved through the larger room, seeming to appear and disappear like no more than a trick of shifting light and dark. Nothing relieved the solid black shape except a small red glow. It was the girasol fire-opal. The Shadow had returned to the Adrian Gallery.

The cloaked Avenger moved in silence through the cellar, searching, until he came again into the larger room of tall crates piled to the ceiling. The Shadow looked at the crates. He examined them carefully. Some still contained paintings carefully wrapped and protected, others were empty, and still others appeared to contain printed matter—leaflets and booklets. The crates with paintings were all addressed to The Adrian Gallery. The empty crates were without labels, waiting to be used. The crates of printed matter were also addressed to The Adrian Gallery, but had on them return labels showing the address of the shipper. The Shadow narrowed his piercing eyes as he noted the crates of printed matter. Each crate had the same return address—*The Coffin Press, Edgartown, Mass.*

Working quickly and in silence, The Shadow opened many crates. He searched inside them among the paintings, the printed matter, and the empty space of the empty crates. He found nothing. The crates of paintings contained only paintings. The crates of printed matter contained nothing more than booklets and leaflets. The empty crates were completely empty. The booklets and leaflets in the crates of printed matter were nothing more than advertisements for the Adrian Gallery's painters, catalogs of various Adrian Gallery shows, price lists, and some few treatises on various aspects of art. There was one group of booklets on Pre-Columbian works,

complete with pictures and locations of the work in various museums and galleries!

The Shadow remained for some time motionless with the booklet on Pre-Columbian works in his long fingers. The fire-opal girasol flashed red in the dim light of the cellar. All the stolen statues were listed, and pictured, in the booklet. The author of the booklet was listed as Gideon Coffin. And the Coffin Press had printing equipment, and no one knew where Morris Kitt had been living since his release from prison. The Shadow placed the booklet within the flowing folds of his great cloak.

His burning eyes saw the open entrance to the abandoned coal room. The Avenger glided across the large room to the small, low entrance. Bending, he entered. The room was lower than the other rooms, its ceiling the paving of the alley behind the gallery. In the ceiling the round manhole cover was snugly fitted some eight feet above the dirt floor of the coal room. The cloaked Avenger looked around the small room. The empty crates were in the coal room. The Shadow dragged one of the crates directly beneath the manhole and climbed onto the crate. Where he stood on the crate it would be a simple matter to open the manhole and climb out into the alley.

The Shadow's stern gaze inspected the manhole. From the inside, as earlier from the outside, the manhole had obviously been opened recently. Dirt and cobwebs that had grown up on the cover over the years had been disturbed. No new cobwebs or caked dirt had adhered yet to the manhole cover. Satisfied, The Shadow leaped from the box and turned to leave the coal room. He stopped. His eyes studied the second crate in the coal room. From the marks on the dirt floor the second crate, too, had been dragged across the floor only recently. The Avenger looked at the first crate beneath the manhole, and at the second crate.

Suddenly, The Shadow came alert. His keen ears listened. Then he moved swiftly from the coal room and blended into the dim and dark corners of the cellar. His trained ears had heard a sound in the large room.

Somone else was now in the cellar.

Invisible in the dark of the cellar, The Shadow watched and waited. He did not have long to wait. His grim and penetrating eyes observed the movement that would have been unseen by anyone but The Shadow.

The vague shape was a man. A tall man. The intruder had

a thin, pale face beneath thick black hair. He held a small flashlight in his left hand, and a pistol in his right hand, as he stepped slowly through the large room, his eyes studying the crates exactly as The Shadow had done only minutes before. The man worked swiftly and expertly in his search. Not simply examining what he found, but obviously searching for something in particular. The man knew exactly what he was looking for. The Shadow did not recognize the man, and yet he seemed familiar. He fitted the description Shrevvy had given of one of the two men on the roof the night before. The Shadow could not tell if the man were right or left-handed, since he had the flashlight in one hand and the pistol in the other.

The man suddenly stopped in his search. The Shadow watched. The dark-haired man stared at some crates, and then looked around the large, dim room. He had spotted some of the crates The Shadow had opened to examine. The man stood alert, his eyes attempting to pierce the darkness that lay in great shadows all through the cellar room. The Shadow realized that, seeing the opened crates, the man had sensed that he was not alone in the cellar. Or, at least, intended to make sure whether or not he was alone by turning his search from the crates to the cellar itself. The man began to step cautiously through the cellar room, his eyes darting from shadow to shadow, his pistol ready, the beam of the flashlight probing like a long, thin finger into the darker recesses.

The Shadow prepared to step out and reveal himself. There were questions to ask this man.

The man with the flashlight whirled in the middle of the room.

"Who is it!"

The man spoke sharply, his voice hard. He was facing completely away from where The Shadow stood hidden in the dimness. The man's pistol pointed at the doorway into the larger room from the rest of the cellar. The flashlight probed toward that doorway. Then the man stepped one step toward the doorway and smiled. It was a cold, wolf-like smile.

"So, Kolchov, we have found you! We . . . No . . . no . . . !"

So low and faint only the ears of The Shadow could have heard it from such a distance, The Avenger heard the quick puff of air, like a puff of sharp wind.

The man in the middle of the cellar room gasped. He

staggered. His pistol fired—once, twice. Both shots flew wildly and struck the far wall. The third shot fired as the man fell, and the bullet buried itself in the wooden floor of the large room. The man lay face down. He moved weakly, crawled, his face turned up in agony and staring at the distant doorway. Then his head fell and he lay unmoving.

The Shadow moved swiftly from his hidden spot and seemed to fly through the cellar room toward the open doorway. His great shrouded figure loomed up in the dim light like some legendary giant bird from out of the distant and unknown past. He glided close to the open doorway.

A shapeless figure stood in the doorway, stood back in the shadows beyond the doorway into the room. An outline without recognizable shape that moved. The Shadow saw an object pointed at him, an object like some large, ungainly pistol.

The Shadow hurled himself down and sideways.

A sharp puff of air spat again in the dark room. Something light struck the thick robe of The Shadow.

He struck the floor on his shoulder, his trained and powerful muscles taking the shock, and rolled away with the speed of lightning. Behind a crate he came up to his knees, his automatic out and aimed at the dark doorway.

The doorway was empty.

The Avenger leaped up and glided toward the door and through. There was the sound of running feet at the far end of the long cross corridor. The Shadow floated in pursuit, making no sound as he ran on his special soft shoes. He reached a sharp turn and came to a second long corridor between the many small rooms. This new corridor led toward the front of the cellar that faced Queenstanding Place. The running footsteps were still ahead.

Soundless, no more than the faint sound of his flying cloak that brushed the walls like the light whir of wings, the Avenger continued his grim pursuit of the shapeless figure. At the end of the second corridor there was another sharp turn, another corridor, shorter this time, and then a blank wall. The corridor came to a dead end at the concrete wall.

The Shadow touched the blank wall surface. It was solid. There was no trace of a secret door. The Shadow turned back without an instant hesitation. Slowly, now, he scanned the walls of the corridor. Half back to the last turn he found a

small door that stood partly open. He opened the door and entered a narrow vertical chamber like the bottom of a well. A circular iron staircase wound upward from the small chamber. The Shadow began the ascent of the narrow iron stairs.

He glided silently upward around the sharp curves of the narrow vertical stairway. Cautiously he climbed, but nothing moved in the narrow confines of the vertical stairwell. At the top he found himself in a tiny, closetlike space. This space, too, was empty and quiet. His sharp eyes searched the dim closetlike area.

A heavy black robe lay on the floor.

The Shadow picked up the robe. It was large and could have covered anything or anyone. He knew at once it was the reason for the shapeless appearance of the figure who had killed the man in the cellar and had tried to kill him. He dropped the robe and began to run his long, sensitive fingers along the walls of the tiny closetlike space. He found the join where there was a door. In the center of the door he found a tiny slide. He pulled back the slide and looked through the peephole the slide had opened.

His eyes were looking into the main room of the Adrian Gallery!

There were few people in the gallery now, the time of closing already past on this second night, and only a few last visitors remained to look at the paintings of Turhan Kemel. In the far corner the Turk himself sat disconsolately on a stool, his heavy eyes staring at his own paintings. There were few small yellow tags that would indicate a sale.

In the very center of the floor, directly before the peephole, The Shadow saw the tall English critic, Jonathan Lambert, taking his leave of Avis Adrian. Lambert vanished from The Shadow's view out the front door. Avis Adrian came back into the room and crossed the bare floor to her husband.

Hubert Adrian stood with his head bent, listening to what his customers were saying. Now, from upstairs, Penelope Drake, the assistant, came down and joined Hubert Adrian. The Drake girl listened to the customers with her pretty face still hidden behind her glasses, her hair drawn into an unattractive bun behind. Avis Adrian joined the conversation, and the Drake girl began to speak as the customer walked away leaving the three staff members. From the seriousness

of their faces, The Shadow guessed that the talk was of money. Or was there something else on the minds of the staff? Perhaps sudden death in their cellar!

From his unseen vantage point, the Shadow observed them all. The three now in conversation, the solitary Turk who seemed concerned with only his own problems, and a man he had never seen before. A giant man. The man wore the uniform of a gallery guard, and stood near the door with the other guards, but he towered over them like some Gulliver among the pygmies. A giant of a man, and The Shadow did not remember Lamont Cranston having seen this man the night before. Now he remembered the words of the frightened Pedro Mingo—Kitt had been afraid of some cold, ruthless person. The man looked like a man to be feared. But The Shadow could learn no more from the hidden peephole. The killer had certainly come up the winding stairs and gone out into the gallery through this secret door. But by now the killer had blended into the scene on the gallery floor.

The Shadow silently retraced his steps down the stairs to the cellar below. In the dim light of the first corridor he stopped to examine his cloak. Something had struck the cloak when the shapeless figure had fired the air gun at him. He searched carefully, aware of the lethal poison in the tiny weapon he was looking for. He found it at last, its point stuck in a fold of the heavy cloak. The point had not broken.

Carefully, very carefully, the Avenger removed the small missile from the folds of the cloak. From its location he could see that his sudden evasion had made the pellet miss, but his cloak had swept out and the pellet had struck the cloak. He held it in his hand and examined it. It was the same as the pellet that had killed Morris Kitt, except that now, the point unbroken, a faintly amber fluid floated inside the hollow dart. A deadly fluid that had missed The Shadow by inches. The dart, and the poison, had not missed the tall stranger who still lay dead back in the large storeroom in the rear. The Shadow knew that he would find a third deadly missile near the dead man.

He placed the pellet inside his clothes with the booklet on Pre-Columbian art, and moved silently again back through the corridors of the cellar toward the large room. The Avenger would examine the body of the man who had been searching the cellar. Perhaps he would learn his identity.

Whoever the man had been one fact was clear—he had known, and recognized, his killer! *So. We found you, Kolchov!* That was what the man had said the instant before he died. *Found you, and we.* More than one man looking for someone they knew on sight. Someone who did not want to be found. Someone who killed swiftly and instantly to avoid being found. Someone called *Kolchov*.

The Shadow reached the doorway to the large storeroom and glided toward the body. He stopped.

The body was gone.

The Shadow stared. Had he been wrong? Had the man been still alive? But the man could not have been alive. The air gun missile was instant and fatal. The Shadow turned to search the dark cellar.

There was a faint noise behind him. The sound of something heavy moving, scraping a metal edge.

The Shadow whirled and floated through the large room to the entrance to the coal room. The manhole cover was just closing. The Avenger crossed the room and climbed onto the single box that stood beneath the closed manhole. He raised the manhole cover and climbed up and through. He stood in the alley in the dark night. Behind him in the Adrian Gallery there was still light at the windows, and in this light he saw a door across the alley swing closed.

Carefully, he crossed the alley to the door. It was locked. With one of his special keys he opened the door and went into the building. He found himself in a long, dark hallway. He moved cautiously along the hallway to the front door. Through the door he saw the darker Fifty-Sixth Street. At the curb there was a large, black car. The back door of the black car was open. In the back seat the Avenger saw a human foot dangling limp. A tall, slender man pushed the foot inside and closed the door. The man did not turn to face The Shadow, but walked around the rear of the black car and slipped into the driver's seat. The car motor started.

Instantly, The Shadow darted from the building, across the sidewalk, and leaped onto the back of the car as it pulled away. Two passersby turned to stare at the great black figure clinging to the rear bumper, crouched low where the driver could not see him.

Then the black car roared away along Fifty-Sixth Street into the night of the city.

9

THE BLACK car drove carefully through the city, taking the darker side streets. Unseen, The Shadow clung easily to the back of the moving car, his black shrouded figure all but invisible in the night, his powerful fingers gripping the smooth surfaces like tentacles.

Unaware of his strange passenger, the driver of the black car crossed the city going west and turned south at last on Twelfth Avenue near the river. Boats blew their mournful whistles on the river in the hot night. On the streets the slum dwellers walked, or sat in their undershirts, oblivious to the black car and its clinging shadow. Soon, below Forty-Second Street and out of the lighted and loud midtown section of the city, the black car began to drive faster.

Like a great bird of prey, a clinging giant bat, The Shadow flew through the night on the back of the car as it roared south. As the car moved faster The Shadow strained his powerful muscles to hang grimly to the rear. At a traffic light, where the black car for an instant slowed, he tore the bandage from his left hand. With his amazing powers of recuperation, and the use of his secret Oriental ointments, the wounds had all but healed, the bones knit. The bandage off, he clung harder as the car again raced on down the long, dark avenue near the river.

At last the black car turned. Slowed and turned right to drive closer to the river and the piers in the hot and humid night. At a low, squat, and darkened building at the edge of the river, the car finally halted. The Shadow leaped off and melted into the dark.

The driver, his face still hidden in the night, looked off into the shadows at the edge of the river. For an instant he thought he had seen something move. But he shrugged and turned again to the car. He opened the rear door and dragged out the dead body of the man who had died in the cellar of the Adrian Gallery. The dead man had been tall, and the driver of the car was slender, but he lifted the dead

body with an ease that showed far greater strength than he appeared to have. The driver carried the body into the low building at the edge of the water.

Hidden, The Shadow studied the low building. A warehouse of some type. It was dirty red brick turned black with age. A long pier jutted out from its side into the river. All about the taller warehouses loomed dark and silent in the night. No one moved on the side street where the black car was parked. And on the low warehouse itself there was a large sign faded with age: *Far East Export Company, Inc.* An export warehouse, with its own pier at the edge of the river! Inside the warehouse a light went on far off through the dirty windows.

The Shadow moved from his position in the darker area of the street and glided through the unlocked door into the vast room of the warehouse. Crates and boxes were piled everywhere on the bare floor. Labels on the crates indicated an Oriental destination, mostly Japan and Hong Kong. The Shadow glided on through the piled crates toward the source of the feeble light. The light was high, above the level of the warehouse floor. From where he lurked below, The Shadow saw that the light came from a glassed-in office set above the warehouse floor itself. A flight of wooden stairs led up to the glassed-in office. Inside the office the driver of the car moved back and forth before the single hanging light.

The Shadow moved unheard up the wooden stairs. Inside the glassed office the driver of the car was bending over the dead man, his hands searching the body. The Shadow slid into the feeble light of the office above the warehouse floor and his laugh echoed through the vast hollow space of the building. The driver jerked upright. It was the English art critic, Jonathan Lambert!

"Who is it!" Lambert demanded.

Then his eyes saw the vague and shrouded figure of The Shadow where the Avenger stood just beyond the circle of brighter light cast on Lambert and the dead man by the single hanging lamp. Lambert suddenly held a small pistol. A silenced Beretta. The art critic held the pistol in his left hand. There was a small, livid scar on his trigger finger. Lambert was the unseen questioner who had smashed the fingers of Lamont Cranston! The Shadow laughed again, a chilling, mocking laugh in the echoing space of the warehouse.

"This time I will ask the questions, Jonathan Lambert, if

that is your name," The Shadow intoned. "I am not Lamont Cranston!"

Lambert was not a man who scared easily. The tall, slender critic held his small pistol steady and pointed at The Shadow. His small mustache seemed to bristle as he studied the shrouded figure before him, saw the hawk nose jutting above the high black collar of the cloak, looked into the piercing eyes beneath the wide brim of the black slouch hat.

"Then who are you? Why the stupid costume!" Lambert said.

All traces of the light and pleasant voice of the art critic were gone. The voice that spoke now to The Shadow was the cold and deadly voice he had last heard when Lamont Cranston sat captive in the sleazy hotel room. Jonathan Lambert was more than an art critic interested in the work of an unknown Turkish painter. The Shadow recalled the hint of warning, of threat, that Cranston had heard in Lambert's voice the night before in the Adrian Gallery.

"Who I am does not matter," The Shadow said. "Who and what are you?"

"You seem to know my name," Lambert sneered. "Then you know who and what I am."

"Why did you bring the body of your partner from the Adrian Gallery to this warehouse?" The Shadow demanded, his piercing eyes looking down at the dead man.

"Did I?" Lambert said in his cold, precise voice. "That would be difficult to prove, wouldn't it? And how do you prove this man was my partner, if I had a partner. What does an art critic need with a partner?"

"You are no art critic, Jonathan Lambert!"

Lambert now laughed. He laughed at The Shadow to his face. Lambert did not frighten at all.

"If you know that then you would know who and what I am," the cold-voiced man said. "You would not be here asking questions. No, you do not know I am not an art critic. You know nothing, my comic friend. It is time to remove the cloak and talk about who you are."

The voice of the supposed art critic retained the faint trace of British accent, and yet the timbre was now so different. The man who called himself Lambert had great control over his voice. Still, beneath the faint British accent, and despite the ability of the man to change his voice, The Shadow heard, sensed, that English was not Lambert's native tongue.

"Come, tell me what you are doing here," Lambert said, his pistol gesturing at The Shadow. "I have no time to waste."

"You wish to find the killer of your partner and Morris Kitt?" The Shadow asked.

Lambert shrugged in the dim light of the glassed-in office above the floor of the warehouse.

"The killer is of no importance," Lambert said. "Death is too common."

The Shadow's chilling laugh was low this time. A soft and yet threatening sound in the cavernous warehouse.

"Then it is the counterfeiters you want," The Shadow said, his eyes fixed on Lambert. "Tell me, Jonathan Lambert, do you want to catch them or merely take their place!"

The tall, slender man jerked his pistol up. His shoulders bent, hunched toward The Shadow like a snake ready to strike. The pistol never wavered an inch from The Shadow's chest. Lambert's cold eyes never left the shrouded and towering figure of The Shadow.

"So, you do know about the counterfeiting," Lambert hissed. "And that Cranston did not! How do you know? Perhaps you are part of the gang! Yes, perhaps you can tell me who killed my stupid partner and that fool Morris Kitt! Perhaps it was you! You were there tonight or how could you have followed me!"

The pistol pointed at The Shadow without moving. "You will tell me, now!"

The Shadow laughed again. "You cannot threaten me, Jonathan Lambert. Not here and now."

"This pistol in *my* hand, you fool, not in your hand!"

"It will not help you," The Shadow mocked. "But I will tell you one thing, the person who killed your partner was known to him!"

Lambert was startled, stared at The Shadow.

"Known? You are sure? Dimitri knew who killed him? You know this!"

"I know," The Shadow said. "Your partner called him Kolchov!"

The pistol in the slender man's hand wavered a fraction of an inch. Lambert seemed to hesitate, to lose the smallest part of his concentration and caution as he faced the black-garbed Avenger.

"Then we were right!" Lambert said almost to himself. "I

knew it had to be, yes! There was no other way they could have found him! It had to be Kolchov!"

Now The Shadow suddenly inched closer to Lambert and brought all the power of his mind to bear on the momentarily distracted art critic. The great power to cloud men's minds passed on to the Avenger by Chen T'a Tze was greater the more a man feared him. The less a man feared, the greater his concentration, the stronger his will to resist The Shadow and the longer it took to gain the power over his clouded mind. When a man had no fear, The Shadow must destroy his concentration, distract his will from the battle to resist. This he had done to Jonathan Lambert.

The tall, thin man became suddenly aware of the power working on his mind. Lambert passed his free hand across his eyes, shook his head to clear it of the thickening cloud. The Shadow laughed grimly.

"You will lower your pistol, Jonathan Lambert," The Shadow intoned. "The pistol cannot help you now!"

Lambert fought. His hand held the pistol steady. His mind battled the swirling fog sent to cloud it, cover it, render it passive and helpless against the will of The Shadow.

"Lower the pistol, Jonathan Lambert!"

The pistol wavered in the thin hand of the supposed art critic. The weapon wavered, moved, began to lower. Lambert blinked, turned his head from side to side to escape the cloud that sapped the strength of his mind. The pistol lowered farther.

"Good! Now tell me who you are and what you want? What were you and your partner Dimitri right about? Who did they find? Who are *they*?"

Lambert fought with all the power of his strong and unafraid brain and will.

"No . . . No, I will not . . . tell . . ."

"You will tell!" The Shadow commanded. "Who killed your partner Dimitri?"

Lambert blinked, the pistol now at his side. The art critic nodded toward The Shadow.

"Yes, my partner was Dimitri. The fool! We all die."

Lambert's mind was wandering now, The Shadow heard this and his thin lips smiled. His eyes burned into the tall, slender man; his powers surged through the small, glassed office.

"Tell me, Jonathan Lambert! Tell me who you are!"

And the tall, slender art critic nodded, blinked, shook his

head. Lambert seemed in a trance now, his tall body swaying. The critic swayed away from the desk that stood in the center of the office and staggered toward the wall of glass behind the desk.

"Stop! Turn! Tell me!" The Shadow ordered.

Lambert stopped, turned.

"Yes, I will tell you what I know," Lambert said.

The explosion shattered the silence of the office, echoed like a great clap of thunder through the vast space of the warehouse.

The Shadow was hurled backward.

The glass walls of the office shattered into a thousand pieces.

Stunned for only a second, The Shadow's keen eyes saw the destroyed attache case that had been on the desk. The bomb had been in the case, a small bomb. The Shadow saw the white gas rising thickly from the case, spreading in a cloud through the office.

The Shadow recovered instantly. The bomb had been loud but of little power. It was not intended to kill or even injure, but only to startle with its loud noise—and to release the thick cloud of white gas.

Choking, The Shadow realized that the gas was not deadly, no more than an irritant. Designed to aid escape, not to kill. A deadly gas would have killed anyone near the case, and the case was designed to allow Lambert, or anyone who carried it, to escape while being held and questioned.

Powerful enough to stop most men for a moment, the gas could not stop The Shadow. His eyes resisted it, his brain was unimpaired. He looked, now, for Jonathan Lambert.

Through the thinning cloud of gas The Shadow saw that Lambert was gone. The Avenger glided across the office to the rear wall behind the desk where the attache case had exploded. The glass wall was smashed. Below, in the dim light of the warehouse, the figure of Jonathan Lambert limped away among the crates and was gone.

The Shadow stared grimly after the vanished Lambert. The supposed art critic, momentarily released from the power of The Shadow, had recovered in an instant. Lambert had hurled himself through the smashed wall of glass to the floor below. The Shadow did not pursue, he would not catch Lambert now. Whoever Lambert was, he was highly skilled, an expert, and his escape from this warehouse would have been carefully prepared. The way the escape of the killer of

both Morris Kitt and the partner Dimitri had carefully prepared the escapes each time.

The Shadow would find Jonathan Lambert again.

Now the Avenger turned to the destroyed attache case that had contained the prepared bomb and gas. The bomb had been a simple affair, small and adequate with a special composition to give great noise. The gas had been released instantaneously. But how had Lambert managed to trigger the clever device?

The Shadow stared down at the body of the dead Dimitri. His eyes glinting fiercely, The Shadow bent over the dead man. He found what he sought—a small, almost imperceptible lump on the body directly beneath the arm pit. With his sharp penknife, the Avenger cut the skin. Beneath the skin, placed there and the wound and skin allowed to heal and grow back, he found a tiny, flat metal object. The Shadow knew at once what he had found—a tiny radio transmitter!

Simple and clever and expert. A tiny radio transmitter responsive only to the single voice of the man who carried it under his skin. Set to trigger the bomb in the attache case when the voice of the man who carried it said he would tell what he knew! Diabolical, clever, and amazingly simple. The bomb hidden in the case that was sure to be kept close to the captured man who had carried it. Set to explode when the captured man, in sham or in reality, at last was forced to say he would tell what he knew. A final weapon that did not depend on the strength or will of the man who used it—the bomb would work even when the man was in reality broken and ready to tell all.

The Shadow knew that Jonathan Lambert must have had such a transmitter beneath his skin also. The final words Lambert had spoken had triggered the bomb and accomplished its purpose. Lambert had escaped. And now The Shadow knew that he was dealing with men far more dangerous than even the police or the Treasury Department imagined. He had to know who they were and what they were doing! Grimly, The Shadow returned to the body of the dead Dimitri.

He found nothing. The body held no clue to the identity, origin, or work of the dead man. There was no identification, no labels in the clothes, no papers or wallet or personal effects of any kind. The clothes were cheap American clothes, sold in a hundred places across the country. In time, perhaps,

the police might trace the man's fingerprints or dental work or other individual marks, but The Shadow did not think this would be easy. This dead man would have no prints on file anywhere, and his dental work would have been done somewhere far away in a large world.

All that the Avenger found on the unknown corpse was a second pistol hidden beneath the shirt at the small of the back, a small ampoule secreted inside the belt and that certainly contained some poison in case of final emergency, and two banknotes folded and hidden in another secret pocket in the dead man's belt. The second pistol, and the poison capsule, proved only that the dead man had indeed been something far removed from the world of art.

It was at the banknotes, the paper money, The Shadow looked now.

They were both foreign bills. One was a Russian 100 rouble note. The other was a Polish 200 zloty note.

Both bills were new, and both had been carefully folded and hidden inside the secret pocket in the dead Dimitri's belt. The Shadow's eyes glinted as he studied the foreign notes. Something had led Dimitri and Jonathan Lambert to the Adrian Gallery. Perhaps these carefully preserved bills would give the answer.

The Shadow focused his mind on the fire-opal girasol on his finger. The blood red stone began to glow more brightly. Soon there was the sound of a car pulling up outside the warehouse. The click of a woman's high heels echoed through the spacious interior. Margo stood in the doorway of the shattered office. Her dark eyes looked at the dead Dimitri.

"That's the man who was in the hall watching Mingo's room," Margo said.

"I thought as much," The Shadow said. "And perhaps you were right, I think he was indeed some kind of policeman. I am not yet sure just what kind."

"Stanley is waiting with the car," Margo said.

"Good, I think we must pay a call on the police," The Shadow said.

Margo turned and led the way from the destroyed office and through the silent warehouse to the waiting car. The Shadow glided across the darkness and into the car. Soon the black limousine was moving through the city, and in the back seat Lamont Cranston considered what he would tell the police.

10

RALSTON bent over the desk in Commissioner Weston's office. The Treasury man peered through his powerful magnifying glass. Then he looked up at Cranston.

"Counterfeit, I'm sure of it. Good, very good, and our experts will have to check me out, but I'll swear they're phony."

Commissioner Weston picked up the two bills, the 100 rouble note and the 200 zloty note, and looked at them. Joe Cardona had already gone to gather up the body of the dead Dimitri. Lamont Cranston was the only other person in the Commissioner's office. When Ralston spoke, Cranston nodded his impassive face and ran his long fingers through his greying blond hair. It was just as The Shadow had suspected.

"The work of the unknown expert engraver?" Cranston said. "The exceptionally good bills you don't know who made?"

"That would be my guess," Ralston said. And the T-man looked hard at Lamont Cranston. "Suppose you tell us how you came across these, Cranston?"

Cranston nodded again. "Well, you will recall I agreed to look around at the Adrian Gallery for any clues. I saw this man hanging around and recognized him as a man I had seen in Pedro Mingo's hotel last night. So I decided to follow him."

So far the wealthy socialite had told the more-or-less exact truth. He had been at the Adrian, he had seen the dead Dimitri, and he had, in a way, followed him to the warehouse. He had simply left out The Shadow and the fact that Dimitri had been dead when he "followed" him. Now it was necessary to lie in full.

"When I reached the office inside the warehouse there had been an explosion and the man I was following was dead. I searched him and found the foreign notes. Then I came here. I suppose I should have called, but the blast had destroyed the telephone. I imagine I bungled it all somewhere."

Ralston looked disgusted. Cranston pretended to be a

highly embarrassed amateur detective. He had not mentioned the name of the dead man, Dimitri, since the man was supposed to have been already dead when he arrived. The information about the dead man's name came from Lambert, and The Shadow did not want to reveal his knowledge of Lambert, or exactly how Dimitri had died. Even his close friend Commissioner Weston was unaware of his identity as The Shadow. The Commissioner had been staring moodily at the foreign bills.

"So it would seem that the gang is working the other side of the Iron Curtain, too," Weston said slowly.

"That seems obvious now," Ralston said. "This dead man must have been a member of the gang. Damn it, Cranston, we could have taken him alive if you hadn't decided to follow him on your own!"

"I had no reason to suspect him of anything until I did follow him, Ralston," Cranston pointed out.

"That's the second member of the gang we've lost!" Ralston snapped.

"If he was a member of the gang," Cranston said. "Perhaps he was *after* the gang the same as you, Ralston."

"An Iron Curtain type cop?" Ralston said. "Maybe, but even the Russian police would probably contact us and work with us on something like this. There's no politics in counterfeiting. We've worked with the Reds before on criminal cases."

Weston looked speculative. "Maybe the Adrian Gallery isn't involved in this after all. That Far East Export Company sounds like a good front for counterfeiters, all the shipping facilities, the foreign contacts. Maybe the Adrian was just involved with Kitt, and the gang followed him there and killed him to keep him silent."

Ralston sighed loudly. "It could be, Commissioner. Since last night I've had checks made on all shipments that came from the Adrian during the last six months. Our reports show that all their cases of paintings were examined by customs and found completely clean. Nothing on any record shows an Adrian Gallery shipment that contained anything but paintings."

"No one was looking for anything but paintings in the crates until now," Cranston said. "How many countries received shipments from the Adrian Gallery?"

"All of them," Ralston said. "Every country that turned up counterfeit bills, and that's just about every country—

even Poland and Russia. The Adrian seems to specialize in foreign artists."

"They do," Cranston said.

"But their shipments were completely clean, Cranston. Those crates contained nothing but paintings!"

"Still," Commissioner Weston mused, "both Kitt and this new corpse were seen at the Adrian. There does seem to be a connection. If we could only identify this new corpse quickly."

While the Commissioner had been speaking the door to his office had opened. Detective Joe Cardona stood in the doorway. He closed the door and walked into the office just in time to hear Weston's last statement. Cardona shook his head moodily.

"Maybe not quickly, maybe not ever, Commissioner," Cardona said. "The guy was clean of identification, absolutely nothing. We took his prints and we took a photograph of him, but I doubt if our files will identify him."

"I'll file the prints with Washington right away," Ralston said. "We'll get the FBI in on it, too."

"Get the CIA also, Ralston," Cardona said. And the stocky detective explained about the poison capsule The Shadow had left on the body in its secret place.

"Someone is desperate if they equipped their men with poison pills," Ralston said. "You're sure there was no possible identification, Cardona?"

"Stripped clean. Someone even cut something from under his skin, darned if I can think what."

The Shadow wanted to examine and analyze the small radio transmitter himself. He was not yet ready to explain about Lambert and the explosion, and Cranston was supposed to have arrived after the explosion with no way of knowing what had set it off.

"Then it seems that he might have been cleaned of identification by whoever blew him up with that bomb?" Weston said.

"Probably, Commissioner," Detective Cardona said, "only he wasn't blown up by a bomb. The bomb wasn't that powerful, and, anyway, the Medical Examiner says the guy didn't die from a bomb."

"What did he die of, Cardona?" Ralston snapped.

"Same as Kitt, a poison pellet thing from some type of air gun. We looked for the pellet, but it wasn't there this time," Cardona said.

"Then why the bomb at all?" Ralston said.

"Darned if I know," Cardona said.

Lamont Cranston, who knew, remained silent. He had learned what he had come to the police to learn—the foreign bills were counterfeit. And somehow the Russian and Polish money had led Lambert and his dead partner to the Adrian Gallery. He would not learn how that had happened by remaining at Police Headquarters. The socialite excused himself. Neither Ralston nor Cardona were sorry to see him leave, they had work to do to try to learn the identity of the dead Dimitri.

In the street, Lamont Cranston stepped into the long, black Rolls Royce limousine that glided up to the curb in the hot city night.

In the dim blue light Margo Lane watched her mysterious chief. The Shadow was working with his special instruments on the tiny radio transmitter. At last his hawk face turned toward Margo.

"Nothing, Margo. Some of the parts are of Czech manufacture, but I can learn no more."

"Czechoslovakia is behind the Iron Curtain," Margo said, her pretty face back to its original form now in the blue light of the hidden room above Park Avenue.

"Czech equipment is shipped all over Europe," The Shadow said.

Margo crossed her long, slender legs where she sat and watched The Shadow at work.

"The counterfeit notes were from behind the Curtain, and Lambert and his partner had them," Margo went on.

"True, Margo," The Shadow agreed, "but if Lambert is a Russian agent or policeman, why is he working alone? As Ralston said, on purely criminal cases such as this a Russian policeman would go to our police and work with them."

"Unless . . ." Margo began.

"Unless there is still something we don't know," The Shadow finished for her. His burning eyes seemed to glow with deeper concentration in the blue light of the silent room. "Lambert and Dimitri were looking for someone. Lambert as much as said that. Dimitri recognized his killer, someone called Kolchov. But I do not think that the person Dimitri recognized, and the person Lambert is looking for, are the same."

In the eerie light of the dim room Margo seemed to

consider what The Shadow had just said. The beautiful, dark-haired woman furrowed her brow in thought. The Shadow waved his glowing fire-opal girasol across the communications console that stood in the hidden room.

"You think Lambert is after something more than a gang of counterfeiters," Margo said.

"I do," The Shadow said. "Lambert has reason to suspect the Adrian Gallery, and yet he did not contact our police."

"But what could Lambert want?" Margo said.

Before The Shadow could answer, the communications console, activated by his girasol ring, began to hum. A voice spoke from the speaker of the instrument.

"Burbank speaking!"

The Shadow spoke low into the instrument. "Report."

"Nothing in our files on a man named Dimitri who fits the description you gave. Nothing on a Lambert, except that a Jonathan Lambert is the art critic of the London magazine, *The Critic*."

The Shadow smiled grimly in the dim blue light. A careful cover. Lambert was a thorough man, and worked for a thorough organization, whatever it might be. Lambert was what he said he was, and The Shadow wondered if *The Critic* knew what strange skills its art critic possessed.

"Go on," The Shadow said into the console.

"Nothing in our records, or in police records, on Hubert Adrian or Penelope Drake. Avis Adrian was booked years ago for receiving stolen goods, and she knew Morris Kitt. Turhan Kemel is a suspected Communist in his own country, but they never had any actual proof on him. The police have now discovered that Morris Kitt was indeed a fanatic about primitive art. A large quantity was found in his possession at his last arrest. Most of it had been stolen, some bought, but they did not use it in the case since they had a more concrete case against him for the theft of more valuable paintings. He knew no one named *Wolf*."

The Shadow nodded his hawklike visage. It began to make sense. Kitt had undoubtedly used his high pay from the gang to finance his thefts of Pre-Columbian art he could not buy. The gang had not liked the possible risk involved, and had killed Kitt. They had simply waited too long. The attention of The Shadow had already been drawn to Kitt

before he was killed. Kitt had been unable to refrain from his thefts, had been a compulsive collector, and whoever was behind the farflung counterfeiting had made the mistake of waiting too long to eliminate the possible danger to the gang.

The Shadow leaned over his console.

"Check all known records for any man connected to counterfeit activities who could be called, 'Wolf.' He will not be listed in the normal sources, check deeper, look everywhere!"

"Yes, at once," Burbank's voice said from the instrument.

"Check the activities of The Far East Export Company," The Shadow ordered. "And check on a man named Kolchov. Just Kolchov."

"Yes," Burbank answered, and said, "Shrevvy reports no unusual activity at Adrian Gallery. The show of Turhan Kemel's work closes tomorrow."

The eyes of The Shadow burned in the blue room. "Tomorrow? Three days? Shrevvy is sure?"

"He is sure."

The Shadow passed his hand and the glowing fire-opal ring across the instrument and it became silent. The Avenger turned his piercing gaze on Margo. The beautiful agent of The Shadow watched her chief as she spoke.

"They are alarmed," Margo said. "They may be running."

"Yes, Margo, and they were not alarmed by the death of Kitt. It is the death of the unknown Dimitri that has alarmed them. He recognized someone at that gallery, and now they are moving. We have no time to lose!"

"Unless..." Margo began again.

"Unless, Margo?"

"Unless it was Lambert who killed Dimitri," Margo said. "You saw Lambert from that closet, he could have come through it. And he knew where the body was, he removed the body."

"Perhaps, Margo." The Shadow agreed with his beautiful agent. "But if it were Lambert, then someone at the Adrian knows that. I must talk to them again, smoke them out before it is too late!"

"They open again at one o'clock tomorrow afternoon," Margo said.

"Lamont Cranston will be there," The Shadow said. "Now, Margo, let us see if the poison pellet I removed from my cloak will tell us more than it told the police."

In the blue light the shrouded figure of The Shadow bent again over his secret instruments.

The sun of another hot day beat down on the great city when the Adrian Gallery opened its doors again. Lamont Cranston waited in his limousine across Queenstanding Place. No more had been learned in the hidden room last night, the air gun missile had yielded no secrets. Now Cranston left his car and walked into the Adrian Gallery. Inside the gallery he sensed the tension in the air. Hubert Adrian was the first to see him.

"Ah, Cranston, how good of you to return!" Adrian said as he came across the gallery room that was all but empty at this afternoon hour. "You must have liked Turhan's work."

"Perhaps," Cranston said. "I hear this will be the last day. That's rather sudden, isn't it?"

"Alas, not enough people have liked Turhan's efforts. Our attendance has been off. And with the hot weather, well, you understand," Adrian explained.

"I do not understand!"

It was the Turk himself, Turhan Kemel. The gaudy man stood behind Adrian who turned to look at the Turk. Kemel was clearly furious. His powerful hands opened and closed in barely controlled anger. Avis Adrian and Penelope Drake were hurrying from other parts of the main room as the Turk roared his protest.

"Two weeks, that was our agreement! Did I come from Turkey for three days?! No! You will not close my show! I forbid it!"

Hubert Adrian temporized. "The work is not selling, Turhan. It is a bad time, I made a mistake. It is too hot. In the fall we will have another show for you."

"In the fall I am in Istanbul! You will not close!" Kemel roared.

Avis Adrian came up to them. "Nothing has sold, Turhan!"

"That is your fault! You do not work for me enough! Always you are all so busy!" Kemel cried.

Penelope Drake put her pretty arm around the shoulders of the angry Turk. The assistant smiled at Kemel.

"The fall will be much better, Turhan," the Drake girl said. "Think, if you stay open the whole two weeks this time, and no one buys, it will be bad for you, you see? The critics watch how works sell. They do not write their reviews for

some time. If they see that you don't sell, that attendance is poor, it will prejudice them against you. Isn't that so, Mr. Cranston?"

The girl smiled at Cranston. The Turk, Kemel, turned to look at Cranston. The words of the Drake girl had reached him, and now he looked uncertainly at Cranston. His temper had been mollified somewhat. He waited for Cranston to speak.

"Miss Drake is right," Cranston said. "Summer is a poor time."

"There," Penelope Drake said. "Now we will ship your works back to Turkey at our expense, and in the fall we will have them, and new ones, shipped back to New York. Meanwhile, we will help you show your work in Turkey."

The Turk nodded moodily. "So! This Mr. Cranston, at least he has returned to see my work again."

"Actually," Cranston said, "I came to ask about engravings. I am interested at the moment in modern engravings. I came to see if the Adrian has any for sale."

The Turk blinked. "Engravings? You came . . . Hack work! Of no importance! Engravings! Nothing!"

The Turk was roaring again. Hubert Adrian managed to quiet him and send him to another part of the room. Then the owner turned back to Cranston. If the mention of engravings had affected Adrian, he had composed himself while he sent Kemel away. Avis Adrian had not composed herself. The tall blonde wife of the gallery owner was pale. Penelope Drake had stopped smiling. She was watching Cranston with a certain interest.

"Engravings, Cranston?" Hubert Adrian said. "Well, we do carry some. Actually they do not sell too well these days. May I ask just which engraver you have in mind?"

"Oh, any engraver," Cranston said innocently. "Old or new, domestic or foreign. Though I admit I prefer new American work."

"You know we carry only foreign work," Hubert Adrian said.

Avis Adrian added, "We have almost no engravings."

"Really?" Cranston said, innocently again.

"No, not completely," Penelope Drake said suddenly, and Cranston saw the girl glance at Hubert Adrian. "As a matter of fact, we have a few works by a very odd man. He approached us some time ago now, and we took some of his work largely to humor him. His name is Morris Kitt, an

exconvict no less. Maybe you know of him, Mr. Cranston?"

The death of Kitt was not widely known. The engraver had little trouble in keeping word of his murder out of the newspapers. There was nothing to be gained by publicizing Kitt's demise, and perhaps a lot to be gained by keeping it quiet. It was unlikely that anyone at the Adrian would have heard—except from the murderer himself!

"Kitt? No, I think not," Cranston said, watching them all very carefully.

"An odd man," Penelope Drake went on. "It seems he engraved in prison, quite modern work, but with very little real promise. He isn't a young man, but it seems he has always loved art. He told me he collected, primitive mostly, and wanted to be an artist himself. His work really wasn't bad, but with very little importance. Talent without real art, you know, Mr. Cranston?"

"A sad thing when it occurs," Cranston said.

He watched all the others as the Drake girl talked. They seemed very nervous. Cranston had the definite impression that Penelope Drake was saying much more than they liked her to say. They all watched the Drake girl.

"Isn't it," Penelope Drake said. "Anyway we did accept some of his work, just to make him feel better. After all, we had to encourage him in order not to destroy him. Mrs. Adrian talked to him more than I did. Perhaps she can tell you more. I believe she knew him from somewhere."

Avis Adrian was as pale as chalk in the rain.

"Yes, I knew Kitt years ago. I...I knew he was an exconvict. When I first met him I didn't know he was a thief. I talked with him quite a lot, trying to discourage him without hurting him. He is an unpredictable man."

Hubert Adrian broke in. "He hung around more than we liked. But maybe you would care to see some of his work?"

"No, not if you say it isn't good," Cranston said.

"I didn't say it wasn't good, Mr. Cranston," Penelope Drake said, "I said it was very good engraving but simply not good art. As a technician he is quite good."

"Hardly enough for me," Cranston said. "Perhaps he will find other outlets for his talent. Engravers can be useful, I hear."

"They certainly can," Penelope Drake said.

Hubert Adrian mopped his face. Cranston watched the owner. The day was hot, but the gallery was air-conditioned.

But Hubert Adrian appeared to be sweating. Avis Adrian was still nervous. Only the Drake girl seemed at ease.

"Well, if there isn't anything else, Cranston," Hubert Adrian said, "I have work to do in my office."

Without waiting for an answer, Adrian turned and crossed the room to the stairs that led up to the second floor. Cranston had guessed that Adrian's office was upstairs. He had seen Penelope Drake, the assistant, use those stairs both times he had been in the Adrian Gallery. Now he wanted a look inside the office of Hubert Adrian. He excused himself and left the gallery. He went to his car. Stanley drove away and around the corner out of sight.

The instant the car was out of sight, Cranston jumped out and walked swiftly up Fifty-Sixth Street to the building he had passed through the previous night in pursuit of Lambert and the dead body. He went through the building and cautiously into the alley. A moment later he had vanished from the heat and sun of the city.

In the cellar of the Adrian Gallery it was not Lamont Cranston who passed silently along the corridors. The Shadow had returned. The Avenger floated through the dim corridors of the cellar until he reached the small door and the flight of circular iron stairs that led up to the hidden closet. He climbed silently and swiftly upward.

In the dark closet The Shadow stood at the tiny peephole and watched the main room of the gallery all through the long afternoon. In the gallery they were all unaware that The Avenger had discovered the secret passageway and hidden closet, and was now using their own secrets against them.

11

A PURPLE twilight settled over the hot city. The sun went down behind the tall buildings, the people rode the weary subways homeward, and another night came.

Inside the Adrian Gallery the dim rooms were deserted. The polished wood floors gleamed faintly in the dark, the pictures on the wall, the wild and gaudy works of the angry

Turk, seemed to have softened in the peaceful dimness. The rooms, large and empty now, seemed to have grown larger in the deserted night, the silence giving them a quiet dignity they did not have in the frantic day.

Somewhere in the distance there were voices and the sound of movement. Faint like a half-heard surf unseen beyond a high hill. The voices and movement continued for some time. Then the silence became complete.

Nothing moved inside the dark rooms of the Adrian Gallery.

The wall of the main room opened and The Shadow stepped out. The black-shrouded Avenger stood listening. Motionless, his cloaked figure blended with the dark shadows of the silent room.

A silent room, but not to The Shadow. His trained and ultrasensitive ears heard a distant voice. It was below the level of normal hearing, and it came from upstairs on the second floor of the darkened gallery. A single voice talking. The Shadow listened, but there was only the single voice talking as if to itself. The Shadow glided across the polished floors and up the carpeted stairs to the second floor.

The shrouded, almost invisible shape moved in silence along the upstairs hall until he reached a door marked *Private*. The voice was speaking inside the private office. It was the voice of Hubert Adrian. Silent and invisible, The Shadow entered the private office.

Hubert Adrian sat behind his littered desk. The tall, elegant man was talking on the telephone. His desk was piled with papers that had been taken from the various drawers. An open suitcase lay on the floor behind the desk. The well-dressed gallery owner had been packing. Now, on the telephone, his brow was beaded with sweat even in the cool and air-conditioned office. A single light burned on the desk, the rest of the office was in thick shadow as Adrian wiped his face and talked.

"...Yes, yes, Cranston must be on the trail of Kitt, of course. I know that, he talked too much about Pre-Columbian art and engraving. Perhaps he was satisfied with the explanation about Kitt coming to have us handle his stuff, but I can't be sure. If he wasn't satisfied we exposed too much. Yes, yes, all right. But we have to pull out, I won't risk it any more!"

The gallery owner mopped his sweating face as he listened. His handkerchief was soaking wet. "No, Cranston is minor,

it's the other two that worry me. Cranston at least we know. Who the devil was that man in the cellar, how did he find us? Yes, yes, but what about that other one? The one in black! My God, he looks like some kind of fanatic! No, I can't risk it any more. There are too many of them nosing around, we need a new cover, a shift of operations."

The Shadow, hidden in the dark recesses of the private office, strained to hear the voice on the other end of the telephone. He could not make it out. His super-keen ears heard the voice, a low, cold, even voice that never rose or fell but spoke steadily and without haste, but he could not hear the words or identify the voice itself. Adrian continued to sweat as he talked.

"... No, not with two killings and everyone nosing around! Kitt and his stupid statues! He just couldn't resist, the fool! He had to draw attention, and then we were too late! There is no other way, we have to move the whole operation! All right, all right, we'll think of something, we'll walk up there, yes. No, I'm not weakening, but I *am* worried. There is no sense in being foolish. Very well, tomorrow, goodbye."

Hubert Adrian hung up the receiver and mopped his sweating face. For a moment the elegant gallery owner sat and stared into the dark corners of his office. Then he sighed, and began to pick up papers from his desk.

The eerie laugh hovered in the quiet room.

Adrian jumped, turned white. "Who the devil...?"

The chilling laugh rose higher, closer.

"Where are you? Who are you! Show yourself!"

Adrian stared around the seemingly empty office.

Like some avenging monster The Shadow moved, loomed up from the dark recesses of the office tower, half-hidden and no more than a great black shape. Hubert Adrian stared at the apparition before him.

"The one in black!" Adrian cried. "What do you want?"

The Shadow's voice was hard. "The killer of Morris Kitt, that is what I want, Hubert Adrian!"

"Kitt? What do I know of Morris Kitt? An unimportant engraver with delusions of grandeur."

"No, Hubert Adrian," The Shadow mocked. "I have heard you speaking on the telephone. It is too late to lie. I know your evil. The Shadow knows the evil in the hearts of men!"

"The... Shadow? I heard about... you," Adrian stammered.

"Then you know I punish all evil," The Shadow said, his voice menacing the elegant gallery owner. "I know all you have done. The counterfeiting, the murders of Kitt and Dimitri."

Adrian seemed to shiver while his face still sweated. "Who sent you? What Government do you work for? I have a lot of money, I can pay you!"

"Your money will not help you, Hubert Adrian. Evil must be punished. You, your wife, and who else? The critic Lambert, who is he, what is he to you?"

Adrian blinked. "My wife? Lambert? Of course, Lambert must be the man you want. I wondered why he was here so much! Of course, he must be using my gallery!"

The elegant and tall man sat behind his desk in the dim office and talked, babbled like a frightened child. But Adrian was not a child. As the tall gallery owner talked his hand moved, slowly, carefully. The Shadow's burning eyes watched the hand. Adrian was not aware that he was seen, that The Shadow watched his hand. The hand stopped, pressed, and then moved away, moved back to the center of the desk as slowly as it had moved to press the hidden button. The Shadow concentrated his mind and waited. Adrian had signaled someone.

"This Lambert, he must be the man. He has been here too often. I think I saw him talking to Kitt," Adrian babbled on, lying to The Shadow. "I can help you to catch him. You can trust me. We are on the same side, you and I. We . . . There! Watch him!"

The man had come through a secret door in the side wall of the office. It was the giant man The Shadow had seen yesterday through the peephole from the hidden closet. The giant held a large automatic. The automatic pointed unwaveringly at The Shadow.

"Who the hell is that? What is it, some kind of stupid party or something?" the giant man said.

"A masquerade party," Hubert Adrian laughed, all his fear gone. "Only now it's over!"

"Do I kill him now?" the giant said.

The automatic moved in his enormous hand as his finger tightened on the trigger.

"I can kill him easy. Let me kill him," the giant said.

"Later, Ivan, there will be time," Hubert Adrian said. "Now I wish to talk with him. Just keep your eye on him."

"I oughta kill him," Ivan said.

Hubert Adrian smiled at The Shadow, the smile of a wolf at its victim. The Shadow stood without moving, his powers concentrated and ready deep in his mind. Adrian was off guard now, and the giant Ivan was a man of small, weak brain power.

"Well," Adrian said, "now I think you had better tell me just who you are, what you want, and who sent you. First you can take off that ridiculous cloak and hat."

"You are a fool, Hubert Adrian!" The Shadow mocked, his laugh rising again in the silent room.

The giant Ivan blinked as the eerie laugh filled the room. Adrian scowled, leaned forward in his chair behind the desk. Then the elegant gallery owner stared. The shrouded figure of The Shadow seemed to grow in the dim office. The great black shape grew taller, wider, expanding in the eyes of the gallery owner until it seemed to fill the entire room. The red glow of the fire-opal girasol, hidden until now, cast light in a macabre pattern all through the room. The red light flashed and glowed in eerie and shifting fingers of light. And behind the wierd pattern of shifting red light the looming black shape of the Shadow seemed to engulf the world before the eyes of Hubert Adrian.

"Boss!" the giant Ivan cried out, fear sudden in his voice. Shifting, boiling patterns of black and red in the room. A thick and rolling cloud of black and red fog. Hubert Adrian dug his long fingers into his clouded eyes. His brain, trapped, reeled under the weight of some power he could not understand but could feel.

"Kill him! Shoot!" Adrian gasped, cried, with his last strength.

But there was no shot. The giant Ivan held the gun, stood for another instant, and then slowly sat down on the floor, the automatic dropping gently to his side.

Hubert Adrian sat in his chair. His eyes slowly closed, his hands rested in his lap.

The laugh of The Shadow was now low and mocking in the total silence of the office.

The two men asleep at his silent command, The Shadow moved quickly. He crossed the office to the littered desk of Hubert Adrian. His long fingers began to search through the papers. He needed to know more before he awakened Hubert Adrian and the giant Ivan. He needed to know all he could before he broke down the resistance of the gallery owner. The more The Shadow could show Adrian that he

knew, the quicker the gallery owner would be broken down and, finally, destroyed.

He searched swiftly and thoroughly. Most of the papers were no more than documents relating to the operation of the gallery. But two documents made the piercing eyes of The Shadow burn with triumph. One was a list of shipments from The Coffin Press, Edgartown, Massachusetts. A regular shipment every week! The Shadow stared at the listing. Booklets, literature, shipped every week? Why? Where did all of them go? No art gallery needed so many booklets, so much literature. The Avenger turned to the second document.

The second document was a small ledger. In it was a list of outgoing shipments from the Adrian Gallery. Shipments that went to all parts of the world. Beside each date and destination there was a figure. Large figures. Figures written in dollars, pounds, francs, roubles, dinar, zlotys, yen and other strange currencies even The Shadow could not instantly identify!! There was now no doubt that the Adrian Gallery was the front for the world-wide counterfeiting organization.

But who was the leader? How was the money shipped? Where were the printing presses?

The Shadow secreted the two documents inside his cloak and went on with his search. The giant Ivan and Hubert Adrian still slept unmoving in the silent room. The Shadow turned to the drawers of Adrian's desk. Most of the drawers were open and empty. The bottom drawer on the left was locked. The Shadow broke the lock with a small but strong tool brought from beneath his black robe.

A small metal box was inside the drawer. A flat metal box like a safety deposit box. The Shadow picked the box from the drawer. He held it in his long, powerful fingers and studied it. It was a strong box, light, but made of a hardened steel nickel alloy, and it was securely locked. The Shadow examined the lock to determine if one of his special keys would fit the lock. His long fingers touched the lock to study the shape of the mechanism. Suddenly, he dropped the box. It crashed to the floor with a metallic echo in the dark and silent room.

There was a tiny point of blood on his finger.

A pin prick, no more. When he had touched the lock of the metal box. A sudden, small, but sharp prick of a pin into his finger.

He knew he had made a mistake. He had been, for one instant, careless.

Even as he thought this, turned away from the desk, his body stiffened.

The Shadow swayed in the silent room. His body shuddered once, twice. He took no other step. His body paralyzed, he crashed helpless to the floor.

On the floor The Shadow lay rigid, unable to move.

His mind, still clear, fought to bring his full powers into play against the powerful drug that surged through his trapped body. For an instant he felt his mind grow strong. Then the drug coursed upward and his mind slipped, grew darker. The dim room was receding, going away, turning black before his burning eyes. He could feel the fire, the light, dying from his drugged eyes. Soon all would go black and The Shadow would be helpless in the face of evil.

Through the silence descending on his ears, faintly, he heard movement in the office. Faces looked down at him. Grinning faces. Adrian and the giant Ivan. Freed from the power of his darkening mind, they had come to stand over him. The giant Ivan raised his ugly automatic. Hubert Adrian pushed the gun away. Adrian spoke sharply to the giant, his lips moving but The Shadow could now hear nothing. Ivan shrugged and stepped back. Hubert Adrian reached out and picked up the telephone.

The Shadow sank into the silent, unconscious dark.

There was a bell. A bell far off and very strange. A rhythmic and yet peculiarly irregular ringing. Not ringing, really, more like clanging; a very unmusical bell. A clang, and then silence. Then two clangs together—clang-clang . . . clang . . . clang . . . clang . . . clang-clang-clang . . . Irregular, the interval never quite the same, and oddly resonant and distant. A kind of echo as if the bell clanged and then the sound reverberated from some resonant surface. A very strange bell.

The bell seemed to come closer. And there was another sound. A pounding. Something very heavy pounding hard. Also irregular. Bang . . . bang . . . bang-bang-bang . . . bang-bang . . . bang . . . Thudding more than pounding, and a third sound like a wind rustling through heavy bushes, swishing thickly. Still another sound like a steady throb, a heavy humming that alternated loud and soft in some peculiar relation to the thudding and pounding. The bell much closer, the irregular clanging seeming to rise and fall, rise and fall.

A boat!

He opened his eyes. He was on a boat, a small power

boat. The bell was a bell bouy, clanging irregularly with the rise and fall of the waves. The thudding, banging, was the powerful boat striking the waves as it plowed through the sea. The throbbing was the engine; the sound like a rushing wind was the sea swishing along the sides of the boat.

The bell bouy was close now, alongside, and passed away behind. The boat moving fast on powerful motors, pounding and surging through the waves. The motion told him that they were out in the open sea. But he could see nothing. Where he sat, his hands bound, his feet manacled, there was no light and no porthole. A faint line of grey light showed where the door was, and there was nothing else for him to see. His eyes, the eyes of The Shadow, grew quickly accustomed and he saw all that there was to see—nothing.

The Shadow was a prisoner!

An instant of carelessness, and The Shadow sat manacled against the bulkhead of a boat in a small and dark room that was bare of all but a few empty crates. A boat that drove through the open sea toward some unknown destination.

But they had not killed him.

The Shadow smiled to himself in the dark cabin of the boat. They had not killed him, and that would be their mistake. Why had they not killed him at once? They had killed Kitt and the unknown Dimitri. He remembered the giant Ivan who had wanted to kill him instantly. Hubert Adrian had stopped Ivan from using his automatic. Why?

A mistake. And soon The Shadow would make them regret this mistake.

Every second he could feel his powers returning, surging through him as the boat surged through the pounding sea. The effects of the drug were draining away. A powerful drug, strong enough to render a normal human unconscious, paralyzed, perhaps for days. But not strong enough to stop The Shadow for more than a few hours. A few hours, no more, and now all his strength had returned and it was time to teach them the enormity of their error.

Quickly, easily, with the skills learned long ago in the Orient from the great Master himself, The Shadow slipped from his bonds, removed the manacles from his legs, and stood up in the dark cabin. He listened with his ultra-sensitive ears. There were voices he could hear over the many noises of the boat and the sea outside. The voices were far

off, near the front of the boat. There were three, perhaps four, men from the sounds.

The Shadow nodded grimly to himself. He stood up and brushed off his clothes. He opened his mouth to laugh his chilling laugh of triumph.

The laugh never reached his lips.

His fingers, as they had brushed his clothes, had felt the shape and texture of the clothes. They were not the black garb of The Shadow.

Where he stood in the dark cabin he looked down at his clothes. He wore the clothes of Lamont Cranston! His cloak was gone, and his slouch hat. His piercing eyes searched the bare cabin. The clothes of The Shadow were not there. He had only the clothes he always wore beneath his black garb—the clothes of Lamont Cranston.

Did they know? But The Shadow and Lamont Cranston were not the same person. The Shadow was *only* The Shadow—a man of mystery whose true face, hidden behind the high cloak and low slouch hat, no one knew, not even his most trusted agents. Lamont Cranston was no more than his major alter-ego, the face of Cranston a creation of the controlled muscles and mind of The Shadow. The Avenger was Lamont Cranston, but Cranston was not The Shadow. The Shadow had a thousand faces, Lamont Cranston only one.

Which face was now in this bare cabin?

He took the small mirror from its secret pocket where it was always kept to aid The Shadow in his instant changes. He looked into the mirror, his trained eyes seeing in the dark as clearly as in the light. He stared at his face for a long minute. The face that looked back at him from the small mirror was the face of Lamont Cranston.

They knew the secret of The Shadow!

12

LAMONT CRANSTON stood in the dark cabin, his face impassive but his mind racing as he considered what had hap-

pened. There was only one explanation. Under the effects of the powerful drug his controlled muscles had relaxed, lost control. Uncontrolled, they had flowed like water into the shape most usual to them. And the person he was most of the time was Lamont Cranston!

They now knew that Lamont Cranston was The Shadow!

But they did not know that The Shadow was not necessarily and always Lamont Cranston! They would have some great surprises coming to them. Lamont Cranston would be far away the next time The Shadow appeared.

Only The Shadow would not appear on this boat. Lamont Cranston must work alone. The black garb of The Shadow was gone. Without the black cloak, and the slouch hat, the power of The Shadow to cloud men's minds had also gone. Without his secret clothes he had no power over the minds of men.

He looked at his hand. The fire-opal girasol was still there. Unaware of its powers, they had not taken it away. But it had little power without the secret garb, and it was time for Lamont Cranston to make his escape. Quickly he went to the door of the bare cabin. The door was locked. His tools and keys had gone with his cloak. He looked around the bare cabin for some means to break the lock of the door. There was noise outside the door, the sound of approaching voices. He recrossed the cabin, sat down, put on his bonds again, and concentrated his mind into a trance of feigned unconsciousness.

He heard the lock turn, and the door opened. Footsteps came close. From beneath his hooded and apparently unconscious eyes, he saw the giant Ivan and a man he did not recognize. Ivan kicked him brutally in the side. The giant laughed.

"Still out," Ivan said.

The other man checked his bonds.

"Tight as a drum," the second man said.

Ivan kicked the supposedly unconscious Shadow again. The giant swore.

"Look at him, and he thinks he's so big!" Ivan said. "In the office he pulled some sort of trick on us, you know? It was like the whole place was full of fog, red and black lights and fog. I couldn't think, you know? Like the fog was right inside my head. I don't even remember what happened next. I woke up sittin' on the floor with my gun down on the floor with me."

"Sounds like he hypnotized you," the second man said.

"Nah, I been hypnotized before, the Chief can do that," Ivan said. "This was different, it wasn't like his eyes, it was just the whole room going like a cloud, like the fog come right out of him. All dressed up in that there black thing and the big black hat. Look at him now! Still out. He ain't so much!"

The big man kicked The Shadow again, the heavy toe of his boot smashing against The Shadow's ribs. The second man rubbed the stubble on his lean chin.

"What do we do with him?" the second man said.

"Kill him, I guess," Ivan said. "The Chief ain't give the word yet. We don't do nothin' except when the Chief gives the word."

"The Chief better hurry," the second man said, "we're gettin' close."

"Let's go up and see," Ivan said.

The two men turned away. Lamont Cranston groaned and moved, the manacles on his legs clanking. Ivan turned back.

"I better check them ropes and chains myself," Ivan said.

The hot, fetid breath of the giant was in Cranston's face as Ivan bent over to check the ropes on his hands. Then the giant turned his back for a second to check the chains on Cranston's feet. In an instant, so fast no human eye could see it, Cranston's hand slid from the ropes, moved up to the big man's side, and removed the clasp knife Ivan carried in his side pocket. The next split second Cranston's wrist was again in the ropes, the knife hidden beneath his body.

"All okay," Ivan said, "let's go forward."

The key turned in the lock behind the two men. Their footsteps and voices faded away forward. Cranston leaped to his feet. He picked up the clasp knife and crossed to the locked door. It was the work of no more than seconds to break the lock and slip out onto the deck.

In a grey dawn light Cranston crouched on the open deck behind the rise of the cabin. As far as he could see on all sides there was only the rolling grey water. The sea was not rough, but there was a long swell, and the boat was moving fast and crashing against the water. The boat was the size and shape of a World War II PT-boat. Deck cabins had been added, but the size and shape were unmistakable. Cranston remembered the PT-boats from his years of service. He had been a colonel in the Office Of Special Services, the famed OSS, and The Shadow had done much work against

the forces of Fascism in the war. It was a PT-boat just like this that had slipped him into the heart of Japan on one mission.

Now, low in the shelter of the deck cabins, Cranston crept forward toward the bridge. The normal flying bridge had been replaced with an enclosed wheel house, a flying bridge set on top of the new wheel house. With the speed of the boat in the heavy swell, spray drenched the flying bridge and the crew was in the shelter of the enclosed wheel house. Cranston saw four men on the bridge. The giant Ivan and the second man who had come into his cabin, a skinny man on the wheel, and Hubert Adrian. The elegant gallery owner had not changed his clothes since the office at the Adrian, but the clothes were creased and drenched now. The four men were intent on the sea ahead, and Ivan turned from time to time to look at the ship's radio.

Aware that there would be at least one more man, the man attending the powerful engines, Cranston crawled carefully back along the open deck. He found an open hatch that led below. Cautiously he entered and moved down the gangway into the bowels of the boat. He found himself in a large cabin area. The whole below deck area aft of the bridge and above the engine room had been made into a single large hold. Cranston stared around. The whole space was piled high with crates. Empty crates!

Cranston moved silently among the piled crates. The empty crates were all the same size, all designed for shipping paintings and literature. The labels, worn and dirty, showed that the crates had been to all parts of the world. Each was identical—solid wooden crates with heavily reinforced corners. They were well made boxes, and expensive—but were they expensive enough to justify the cost of shipping them back from all across the world? He had no doubt that when shipped out they had contained paintings. They were identical to all the crates in the cellar of the Adrian Gallery. Then why ship them back empty, and then carry them to some destination on a fast-moving converted PT-boat? Carry them empty!

It was clear that when they again returned to the Adrian Gallery, the crates would not be empty. Undoubtedly they would contain booklets and literature from The Coffin Press, one of the weekly shipments. And Cranston now knew the destination of the converted PT-boat—Edgartown, Massachusetts, on the vacation island of Martha's Vineyard. But

what else would the crates hold, and where? How? Then his hooded and impassive eyes flashed suddenly like the eyes of The Shadow. The crates.

It was the crates, the solid boxes themselves, that were being transported.

Quickly, Cranston picked up one of the boxes. It was light, too light. Silently he carried a single box to an open space in the hold. With the clasp knife so deftly removed from the giant Ivan, he pried open a crate. The wooden walls were thick, far too thick for the light weight of the box. He pried off one of the reinforced corners. Then he smiled as he looked at the open end of the hollow board. The boards that made up the crates were all hollow. Perhaps not all, some would be solid for strength, but most would be hollow. A space not wide, but wide enough to pack many, many pieces of crisp, new and very phony paper money.

Cranston sat and looked at the crate. Loaded with the money its weight would be just about right for its size. Packed with paintings, braced from inside, the strength would stand all the rough handling. A fine scheme for shipping counterfeit money all over the world. Who would look at the container itself while searching the contents for bogus bills? No wonder no customs man had found anything inside an Adrian Gallery shipment—there was nothing *inside* the boxes but what was supposed to be there. A clever plan, and paintings were the perfect cover—a gallery made shipments all over the globe, especially a gallery known to specialize in foreign painters. And The Coffin Press, on the innocent vacation island of Martha's Vineyard, had presses, ink, and paper! The Coffin Press was almost sure to be a small, special printing company that had much use for very special type papers—even for paper that could be used for the printing of crisp, new and very illegal paper money.

Cranston carefully reassembled the box, closed it, and returned it to where he had found it. He removed all traces of the box being moved or opened. He then continued his inspection of the large cargo hold. He found nothing else of importance. The hold was crammed with the empty boxes and nothing more. Cranston returned unseen to the open deck. The four men were still busy in the wheelhouse forward. Cranston crept along the deck in the shelter of the cabin section. At the stern he found a door that led into another cabin. The door was unlocked. Before he entered he looked forward again to be sure the four men were still in

the wheelhouse. They were there, and, beyond them, beyond the plunging bow of the fast-moving PT-boat, there was a faint shadow of land on the horizon. He would have to work faster.

He stepped into the cabin. It was a small cabin exactly like the one where Cranston had been held prisoner. Only this cabin was well and comfortably furnished. There was a narrow bed, some leather armchairs, a television set, a short wave radio set, a desk and desk chair, and a small safe. Cranston looked at the safe. A safe meant something of value; records, documents. Cranston crouched before the safe, and his long fingers turned the dial slowly. His ear close against the dial, he turned and listened to the sound of the tumblers. Each time Cranston or The Shadow had reason to open a safe or pick a lock he thought of the small, bespectacled, very proper-appearing man who had taught him the art of safecracking—Walter Pettibone. The small criminal, who had lived half his life in prison but looked like a meek bookkeeper in some sedate firm, had taught him well. The safe opened in seconds.

Cranston removed the contents and examined them. They were disappointing. Documents similar to those he had found in the office of Hubert Adrian—perhaps the same documents brought along from the gallery office, there was no way for Cranston to be sure one way or the other. Paper money of various denominations and from various countries, probably counterfeit, only proved what he already knew. Records of paper purchased by The Coffin Press showed nothing unusual—if special and expensive paper had been bought the fact was well concealed in the records. The only item of any interest was a small ring. Cranston studied the ring. It had been in a velvet lined box, but it did not look very valuable at all. Then why keep it in the safe?

Cranston examined the ring at the open porthole of the cabin. It was gold, but of low value. A simple gold signet ring, the letter "K" engraved in reverse on the flat face. The kind of signet ring that could be bought for, perhaps, twenty dollars. And yet it had been locked in the safe. The letter "K." Morris Kitt? Evidence, perhaps, of murder and so locked away? Kitt had been an engraver, it was possible he had made the ring for himself. Somehow, it did not seem likely. There was one other "K" in the affair—the named but unknown *Kolchov*. Dimitri had called his killer *Kolchov*. There was only one Russian-sounding name in addition to

that of Dimitri himself, and that was the giant Ivan. On the other hand, the mysterious Lambert was certainly using a false name.

The ring told Cranston nothing more, and he returned it to the safe. He returned all the documents and closed the safe. Then he left the cabin and returned to the open deck. A hot summer sun was just rising from the sea to the east directly ahead of the fast-moving PT-boat. The land ahead was closer now. Cranston suspected that the PT-boat was not far from its destination. It was time for him to return to his prison. They were unaware of his revival or escape, and he wanted it to remain that way until they arrived. Then it would be time to surprise them all.

Inside the dark and bare cabin where he had been imprisoned, he carefully relocked the door with the small blade of Ivan's clasp knife—another skill learned from the innocent-looking Walter Pettibone. He lay down where he was supposed to be and slid back into his bonds and manacles. Concentrating his mind, he fell into the trance that made him appear to be still under the influence of the powerful drug. He was ready for them to come for him.

He did not guess that they would come so soon.

No more than five minutes after he had reassumed his place in the dark prison, he heard the approaching footsteps and the voices. The lock turned and the cabin door was flung open. The giant Ivan and the second man entered the dark cabin. It was Ivan who spoke.

"Look at him, still out!"

"That stuff is mighty powerful," the second man said.

"You take the feet," Ivan said.

Before Cranston was aware of what they were doing, hands gripped his feet and his neck and he was lifted up. He was carried toward the opened door.

"Limp as a damned rag," the giant Ivan said. "He'll never know it happened. That ain't good. I like to see their eyes."

"You're a sweetheart, Ivan," the second man said.

"The eyes get scared," Ivan said, his voice eager. "They start begging. Maybe they even cry. That's when it's good, when they know it's coming."

"Remind me to stay friends with you," the second man said as he gripped Cranston's feet and walked backward toward the stern of the fast-moving boat.

"Once, in the war, I had a general. He begged me. He couldn't stand up. He begged for a long time before I shoved

him down under the ice. I could see him down there trying to break out, trying to find the opening I'd shoved him through. You should have seen him kick, claw at that ice. He lasted almost three minutes under there. I could see his body any time I wanted."

"Too bad it's summer," the second man said, "no ice out here."

"I guess the water'll do. The Chief says over, so over he goes," Ivan said. "Them chains'll sink him quick."

The Chief said to toss him over, and Cranston and The Shadow, and Cranston had to decide quickly. He could escape, try to capture or kill the men on the boat. It would be simple. But if he did that he would have the men and the boat and nothing more. He did not know where they were going. To capture the men and the boat would make the rest run, perhaps vanish, until they could start again somewhere else. The organization would still exist. The presses and the hidden operation would still exist. To take this boat would not be good enough.

He must let them throw him overboard.

Once over he would not be able to reach the boat again to hang on and be carried to their headquarters, the boat was moving much too fast. But Cranston could swim to any land he could see, and land was in sight ahead. It would be a long swim, but Cranston and The Shadow would be dead to them, and that was an advantage he would use. Secure, they would continue their operations in imagined safety—until The Shadow returned to stop them. There was no other course, he would be thrown overboard and would sink to his death in their eyes. He prepared his muscles and his mind for the task ahead of him now. It would not be simple. To escape would be simple, but he could not rise too soon and be seen by them, and he could not sink too far or even The Shadow would never rise again.

He felt his body being lifted to the rail, the sound of the powerful propellers directly beneath him.

"Throw him clear of the propellers," Ivan said. "It takes longer to drown, I don't want him killed quick by the props."

"You think of everything," the second man said.

"It's a shame we won't see him," Ivan said.

Then he was raised up and hurled into the air. His body plummeted down. He did not move until he struck the water and went under.

He sank. Down and down under the dark sea. Using his shallow breathing technique learned in the Orient, Cranston let his body sink. The ropes were soon off, and the manacles. He sank now more slowly. His mind timing his descent, he waited. The water was growing black. Above, only the faintest light showed at the distant surface. He waited. At last all was black. Without looking down, aware of the danger of the "rapture of the deep" that even The Shadow was not immune to, he turned at last for the surface.

His lungs breathed the hoarded air in his mouth, needing little under the technique of the shallow breathing. He surged upward. Slowly the sea became lighter. Then there was no more air for even the shallow breathing. He surged upward. Had he miscalculated? The surface seemed so far away and there was no more air. Now he battled the same as any man, his advantage gone. The bright sun of the surface mocked him far above. His powerful muscles strained. Upward . . . upward . . . Lungs at the point of bursting. His vision blurring, growing darker. Battled on and up . . . up . . .

Lamont Cranston burst out into the rising sunlight.

For an instant he gasped for breath.

Then, revived, he sank back until only his eyes protruded from the water. He saw the PT-boat moving very fast away and far ahead. Too far to have seen him come up. But he knew he had not stayed down a second too long. Far ahead, on the fantail of the PT-boat, the giant figure of the sadistic Ivan still stood and stared back toward where Cranston had, supposedly, sunk to his death. But it was too far now for Ivan to see his tiny head bobbing just above the surface of the rolling sea. Cranston turned on his stomach and began to swim. The land was a low grey cloud on the horizon.

An hour later, the PT-boat long gone, Cranston swam on toward the land that was visible now as high and colored clay cliffs. The cliffs were white and red and black. On top of the cliffs there was a squat lighthouse. A line of surf broke far off on the beach, and behind the surf and the cliffs the land was green and wooded. Martha's Vineyard. Cranston knew the colored cliffs of Gay Head, and, off to his right, the deserted island of No Man's Land. Land was not far now, no more than a few miles, and he struck out with increased strength, his powerful stroke pulling him on.

The first shark was no more than a black fin cutting the heavy swell of the sea that was blue in the morning sun.

The shark circled once, twice, and then came straight toward the swimming Lamont Cranston.

A tiger shark.

Cranston dove, and the clasp knife of the giant Ivan was in his hand. Beneath the surface he turned to face the attack of the maneater. The shark was large, its faint tiger stripes clear on its side. Cranston waited. The shark came half on its side, the rows of razor teeth glinting in the muted light beneath the surface as it attacked with its great mouth open, slashing toward him. All his muscles strained, Cranston evaded the rush. The shark was past him, turning. Half past him, the deadly tail coming closer. Cranston grappled and plunged the clasp knife into the savage attacker.

Evading the slashing teeth and the whipping power of the shark's tail, he clung to the monster, his clasp knife plunging over and over. The rough skin tore at his hands, at his clothes. The sea was red with the blood of the shark. He slashed and cut with the strong clasp knife. Blood everywhere, it was hard to see, and soon he had to surface to breathe. Grimly he clung to the wounded giant of the sea.

Then the shark was gone, its blood leaving a trail across the blue water in the sun.

Cranston, on the surface again, swam on. The battle had sapped his strength and now the island ahead seemed far away. The barren shore of No Man's Land was closer. He turned his direction toward No Man's Land. Then he saw the other sharks.

Behind him the fins cut the water like the black scythes of death. The water boiled red where they tore at the bloody body of their wounded brother. But all did not stop, and they would soon devour the remains of the wounded first attacker.

Cranston held his clasp knife.

But there were too many this time.

He circled slowly in the water, his eyes riveted on the fins that moved closer.

The boat was almost on him before he knew it was there, so deep had been his concentration on the imminent attack of the shark horde. The boat loomed up on the heavy swell, close to him. Men shouted from the deck. The dory, dragged always behind the boat that was a Menemsha lobster boat, bobbed on the water almost on top of Cranston. He swam as fast as he could for the dory.

Faces leaned over and hands reach out to pull him from

the sea and the rush of the sharks. In the boat he lay on the boards and the men smiled down at him.

13

"PRETTY CLOSE that," the man said.

Cranston sat in the living room of the small shack. Through the window the hot sun beat down on the sheltered water of Menemsha Pond. Between the shack and the water of Menemsha Pond the nets and lobster pots hung from poles in a littered yard and dried in the heat of the day. The living room of the shack was bare and austere, but with a certain rough comfort. The man who sat facing Cranston and smoking a pipe still wore his rubber boots and the heavy sweater he had worn at sea when he had pulled Cranston from the water.

"Very close," Cranston said. "There were too many."

"Because you killed that one. That took some doing, eh?" the man said. "You're at home in the sea. What were you doing out there, Mr. . . . ?"

"Cranston. I . . . I fell from a boat."

The stocky, thick-set man raised one bushy eyebrow. His weatherbeaten face seemed to smile with a kind of simple tolerance.

"Fell? Well, I expect you'll tell me if you want me to know, eh? Lucky for you we happened along."

"You're a lobsterman?"

"Aye, I am," the stocky man said sucking on his pipe. "The name is Sulu, my friends call me Sulu. Sulu Sea Calin III, that's my name. We might as well get that out of the way now, eh?"

Cranston smiled. "Sulu Sea?"

"The Third don't forget. Everyone wants to know where I got such a name," the man said. "Well, my greatgrandfather was a whaler, captain of his own ship out of Edgartown. His son, my grandfather, was born on a voyage in the Sulu Sea, so the old man named the boy Sulu Sea Calin. The first Sulu Sea, my grandfather, was captain of a whaler, too. Around these parts we like things the same, against change,

eh? So here I am, Sulu Sea the Third, not a whaler now but just a lobsterman."

"But still a man of the sea, Mr. Calin," Cranston said.

"Aye, perhaps I don't disgrace the old name at that," Sulu Calin said. "A lobster's smaller than a whale, and we catch them differently, but there's value in a lobster too."

"I would rather eat a lobster than a whale," Cranston said.

Sulu Calin laughed. "Aye, you've got a point there." The stocky man's eyes sparkled. "So you fell from a boat, eh? Well now, what were you coming up here for anyway? Vacation? That's the real business of the island now. Our fathers would turn in their watery graves, eh?"

Cranston hesitated. He liked this stocky man with the strange yet fitting name. But The Shadow could never be too careful. Still, he could use the help of a man who knew Martha's Vineyard well. A part of the truth would perhaps not be too dangerous in case this Sulu Sea Calin the Third was not what he seemed.

"Actually, I'm looking for some people," Cranston said slowly. "They appear to be connected with The Coffin Press in Edgartown."

Sulu Calin shook his head. "As far as I know old Gideon runs the press all to himself. Never knew him to have anyone else work with him."

"Gideon Coffin?" Cranston asked.

"Aye, one of the last of the old Coffin family of the island. There are still some over to Nantucket, but not many left here. Whalers and merchant captains they were, the lot of them. Even old Gideon had a touch of the salt spray on his face when he was a boy, but it didn't suit him. He's been sitting in that big house for nigh on to fifty years now."

"He lives here on the island?" Cranston asked.

"On Chappaquidick Island, that's over in Edgartown Harbor, at the other end of the island from Menemsha here. It's a whale of a house, a monster. It faces on the outer harbor at Edgartown, but it's high enough for a person on the widow's walk to look out over the sea to the south. Old Isaac Coffin himself built the place over a hundred years ago when Edgartown was still a whaling port and you wanted a house could look out to sea. Not many built houses that big, they were hard to heat, but the Coffins always did good making money."

"What about The Coffin Press?"

Sulu Calin laughed. "Always rich and always looney, that's the Coffins, Cranston. With old Gideon it was 'art,' he went crazy for art. At first he bought paintings, then he tried to start a museum up here, and finally he started The Coffin Press. Writes a lot of his pamphlets himself, I hear. Darned if I know if they're any good. It's a sort of hobby, I guess, printing up all those leaflets, booklets, even books. Guess he doesn't have much else to do all alone in that big house."

Cranston's hooded eyes narrowed in his impassive face. A rich eccentric living in a large mansion on an island directly on a harbor, and who owned a printing company he operated alone as far as anyone knew.

"Then he lives alone? No family at all?" Cranston asked.

"None," Sulu Calin said. "He never married. His brother Ephram married, had one kid before the sea got him. Old Gideon doted on the nephew, but the boy went and married all wrong and they sort of split. There is a grandniece, Penelope Drake, who visits him sometimes, but I don't think they get along so well."

There it was, the connection Cranston had been looking for. Penelope Drake, Hubert Adrian's assistant, was Gideon Coffin's grandniece! That was how the Adrian Gallery and The Coffin Press had probably gotten together.

"What do you know about anyone named Adrian?" Cranston asked the stocky lobsterman.

Sulu scratched his chin with the stem of his pipe and seemed to think.

"Well, I heard old Gideon has a connection with a gallery down New York way, I think it was something like Adrian Gallery. Come to think of it, I've seen that name, Adrian, in the paper sometimes. Listed as visiting old Gideon. Up this way a visit passes as news for the paper, eh?"

What better headquarters for a counterfeit gang? An old mansion, very large and with a view out to sea, on a vacation island where people came and went constantly. Comings and goings would be unnoticed. The PT-boat could deliver almost unseen. Boats were so common up here. The Coffin Press a perfectly legitimate cover for constant shipments to the Adrian Gallery. The phony bills could be shipped through the Adrian Gallery in the boxes, or directly from The Vineyard under the Adrian label. As a final touch

old Coffin was a known eccentric and had a grandniece who worked in an art gallery—The Adrian Gallery. Almost anything that happened would not arouse suspicion!

Cranston stood up. "When a man saves your life, there isn't any proper way to thank him, Mr. Calin, but you have my thanks."

"Call me Sulu, Cranston," the lobsterman said.

"All right, Sulu, and I wish I could tell you more of why I am here, but it could be dangerous for you. You've been a great help, and it's possible I'll need a boat later."

"Call on me, eh? I figure you're a good man, and you've got some kind of trouble. A man like you don't go swimming out that far for fun, eh? After all, I got an investment in your life, eh?"

Cranston smiled. "You certainly do. If I need your help, I will explain the entire matter. Until then, I need one more thing, your telephone."

"New York call? Get the Falmouth operator," the stocky man said.

Sulu Calin sauntered from the shack then, discreetly leaving Cranston alone to make his call. Cranston got the Falmouth operator and through to New York. Margo's voice was agitated on the other end of the line when the beautiful agent of The Shadow answered and heard who was calling.

"Lamont! Where are you? We've been worried to death!"

"I'm all right, Margo, and so is The Shadow, although we are both presumed dead," Cranston said grimly.

The wealthy socialite explained the almost fatal occurrences of the previous night and morning, leaving out only the battle with the sharks. There was no point in alarming Margo with a close brush with death that had not harmed him in the end. But he mentioned his new-found friend, Sulu Sea Calin III, and what the Vineyard man had told him of Gideon Coffin.

"The Drake girl is his grandniece?" Margo said. "Do you think she is part of the gang, Lamont, or simply a dupe?"

"I don't know, Margo. That is something we must find out. In the meantime, Cranston must remain dead. Here is what I want you to do. Come up here at once, you can get a plane and be here in a few hours. Call first and reserve two rooms at The Harborside Inn in Edgartown for Henry Arnaud and his secretary. For now, Margo, you will be Arnaud's secretary, Ellen Morgan, once again."

"I haven't been Ellen for some time, Lamont, and you

haven't been Henry Arnaud. Where is Arnaud supposed to be now?"

"At the moment Arnaud is on a lengthy business trip in Brazil, a coffee deal. He took Ellen with him, of course."

Cranston went on to explain in detail the supposed recent activities of the business man and financier, Henry Arnaud. Arnaud was, in reality, only another of the alter-egos of The Shadow. The businessman was a personality The Shadow used when Cranston could not be used for some reason, such as the present supposed death, and when a business matter was involved. Cranston had a business deal in mind as a cover for The Shadow's next investigation.

"When you have reserved the rooms, Margo," Cranston explained, "call Gideon Coffin and arrange a meeting between him and Arnaud to discuss a business deal. Arnaud wants to buy some land on the Vineyard for a hotel. A multi-million dollar project. He has the land, I learned that from Sulu here."

"I will, Lamont," Margo said.

"Good. Bring my makeup kit, and another set of the clothes of The Shadow. Also. any reports Burbank might have."

"Yes, Lamont."

"I will meet you here in Menemsha. Take a taxi from the airport to Menemsha. Leave the taxi and walk out onto the lobster boat docks. Sulu will find you and bring you to me. I cannot risk being seen, and in the meantime I must familiarize myself with the business affairs of Gideon Coffin so Arnaud will be convincing."

"In a few hours then, Lamont," Margo said as she hung up.

Alone in the shack, Lamont Cranston sat for a time in thought. Then he stood up abruptly and went to the door to call Sulu Calin. In the shack again, Sula explained in detail the problems and advantages of a hotel on the Coffin land in Menemsha.

Some hours later, the sun halfway down the afternoon sky above the high hills that bordered Menemsha Pond, a taxi pulled up behind the wooden dock of the lobster boats. The woman who stepped out carrying a large suitcase was rather plump and appeared shorter than she was. Her red hair gleamed in the sun above her prescription sunglasses. Her pretty face, a trifle thick in the nose, looked about her as if

enjoying the quaint atmosphere of the fishing village of Menemsha. A stocky lobsterman walked casually past her. No one could have seen the lobsterman speak.

"Miss Morgan, follow behind me, not too close he said," Sulu Calin whispered as he passed.

Margo, or Ellen Morgan as she was now, picked up her suitcase and seemed to walk aimlessly along the dock in the same direction as the lobsterman. The man turned and crossed the road to a line of small cottages. He paused there to light his pipe. The red-headed woman also crossed the road to a point near the stocky man. Ellen Morgan followed him until both were sure they had not been observed. Then the two walked rapidly and together to a small shack that was Sulu Calin's home.

"Come in, Margo," Cranston said.

In her disguise as Ellen Morgan the beautiful private secretary of Lamont Cranston entered the shack. Sulu Calin remained outside casually smoking his pipe in the fine afternoon summer sun, but actually he was watching all approaches to the shack. Cranston took the suitcase and opened it. While he removed the clothes, Arnaud's clothes and the black garb of The Shadow, Margo reported.

"The Adrian Gallery is temporarily closed, Lamont. Shrevvy reported that. The Turk, Turhan Kemel, is still in New York, his visa is not yet up, but the others from the gallery seem to have vanished."

"I think we will find them. But Kemel has not returned to Turkey? I wonder what he is waiting for?"

"The Far East Export Company seems legitimate, but it has extensive connections with Hong Kong and Tokyo. Lately, its shipments from Hong Kong have become much smaller. However, the company has increased its contact with Korea, and recently had some dealings with Afghanistan. As far as Burbank can determine, it has never traded with Europe."

Dressed now in the clothes of Henry Arnaud, Cranston hid the new Shadow garb inside the secret pockets of the innocent dark blue tropical suit Arnaud favored. Arnaud was a much less conservative dresser than Cranston, and the blue suit had a very modern cut of South American style as if bought in Brazil.

"Afghanistan? I wonder, Margo. Our friend Lambert must have appeared from somewhere," Cranston mused. "Go on, Margo."

"The investigation of men named *Wolf* led Burbank to only one possibility. There was no Wolf, Wolfram or Wolfgang or any other possibility listed as a known counterfeiter or associate of counterfeit rings. However, during the war British Intelligence did report once that a man named Wolfgang Grobut was thought to be involved in some counterfeiting work for the Gestapo. The British thought that Grobut may have been making false Allied currency for the Nazis. No proof was ever found. Checking further, Burbank found that a Wolfgang Grobut had been a well-known young engraver connected to the Bauhaus group many years before the war. However, this Grobut supposedly died in the war."

Cranston stopped with his special makeup kit open on the table before him. His impassive face seemed deep in thought as he considered Margo's last statements.

"Some ends begin to tie up, Margo. A man who worked on false money for the Gestapo would probably be first rate, and would be unknown to most police forces, perhaps to all. If Grobut is not dead, he could be the unknown but excellent engraver working with the gang. What about Kolchov?"

"Nothing, Lamont," Margo said. "There is no record of a Kolchov in any police file, or in our files."

Cranston nodded. "That does not surprise me. If there is such a person, the name is certainly a code name. Very good, Margo, and now I think it is time for Henry Arnaud to appear and keep his appointment."

Lamont Cranston bent over his special makeup case. The small mirror propped up on the table, he went to work. Henry Arnaud was a taller man than Lamont Cranston or The Shadow. Now he put the special buildup shoes onto his feet. This done he turned to his face. In a matter of seconds, with special putty and secret fluid from a hypodermic injected beneath the skin, the broken and broad nose of Henry Arnaud appeared. The nose was the result of Arnaud's early boxing career, and was well known to the world.

A special bridge, designed to stretch the amazingly elastic jaw muscles of The Shadow, seemed to elongate the face and hollow the cheeks, producing the well-known gaunt face of Henry Arnaud. Invisible tape at the corner of the left eye made the eye droop downward—the result of another boxing injury. Instant dye, of The Shadow's own formula, turned Cranston's greying blond hair into the almost white hair of Arnaud. Finally, clenching his fist, and narrowing his left

hand with the plasticity of bone and sinew learned from his years of *yoga*, he slipped on the ugly artificial hand, the reported result of losing his left hand in an automobile accident twenty years ago.

Henry Arnaud stood in the shack and turned to face his red-headed secretary, Ellen Morgan.

A tall, gaunt-faced man with a broken nose, a drooping left eye, almost snow-white hair, and the ugly metal hooks of his artificial hand. His small, shrewd eyes revealed a clever cunning, the shrewdness that had made him such a feared man in a business deal. The eyes so different from the quiet and hooded eyes of Lamont Cranston. His face, as he looked at his secretary, was cold and impersonal. Henry Arnaud was known as a hard man of business, made cold and ruthless by the tragic accident that had cost him his hand. A strong and silent man who lived for business and had few personal friends. When he spoke, his voice was gruff and harsh, without a trace of the slow warmth of Lamont Cranston.

"Shall we get to work, Ellen?" Henry Arnaud said.

"Yes sir," Ellen Morgan said. The plump, red-haired girl immediately assuming the natural manner of Ellen Morgan, even as Arnaud immediately and automatically assumed his proper personality the moment the physical transformation had taken place.

"I have rented a car," Arnaud said crisply, "you will drive as usual. I believe Mr. Gideon Coffin expects me in an hour."

Sulu Calin, smoking his pipe, showed no surprise when Henry Arnaud walked from the shack Lamont Cranston had gone into such a short time before. The stocky lobsterman merely nodded, and indicated that he would be waiting to hear from his mysterious guest if he were needed. Arnaud strode to the rented car without more than glancing at Sulu. Arnaud was not a man who wasted time on the amenities. In the car, Ellen Morgan took the wheel and they drove off south and then east toward Edgartown at the other end of the island.

"Very well," Arnaud said crisply, "let us consider what we know so far. The Adrian Gallery is a front for the counterfeit ring. The money is shipped inside the boxes of paintings. There is some apparent connection to The Coffin Press owned by this eccentric Gideon Coffin. Penelope Drake, assistant to Hubert Adrian, is the grandniece of this Gideon Coffin. A man named Wolf was known to Morris Kitt, and a certain Wolfgang Grobut may have been a counterfeiter for

the Nazi Government during the war but is presumed dead.

"Another person, named only Kolchov, appears to be involved: identity unknown, occupation unknown, connection to the gang also unknown. But Kolchov was known to men named Lambert and Dimitri, the man Dimitri now murdered. Lambert and Dimitri are, apparently, in pursuit of the counterfeiters also. Lambert and Dimitri were somehow connected to The Far East Export Company whose activities center around countries with connections to the Communist world, notably recent dealings with Afghanistan. You noted, Ellen, that Far East has lessened its dealings with Hong Kong, which tends to indicate that the company's connections are more with the Soviet than with Red China."

"Yes sir," Ellen Morgan said.

"Good," Arnaud snapped.

The gaunt businessman took out a long, slender cigar. The expensive Mexican cigars were Arnaud's only vice. Drinking, he always said, lessened a man's alertness, reduced his efficiency, and harmed sharp business dealing. The cigar alight, clamped between Arnaud's strong teeth, the businessman's shrewd eyes became coldly speculative.

"Now the questions. One: Where is the money printed? The answer, I should say, is here on this island. Two: Is Penelope Drake a dupe of the gang, or a member? And if she is a member, or a dupe, from which end does it come? That is, did the Drake girl bring her greatuncle Gideon Coffin to help Hubert Adrian, or did she bring Adrian to help Coffin? This question also involves the third question: is Adrian the leader, or Coffin? Or are neither of them the leader? Is the mysterious Kolchov the leader, and who is Kolchov? Or perhaps Wolfgang Grobut is the leader if he exists and if he is not dead."

"Could Wolfgang Grobut and Kolchov be the same?" Ellen Morgan said quietly.

"A good thought, Ellen. Yes I thought of that. Pedro Mingo, you recall, was not sure if 'Wolf' and the deadly person Kitt feared were not one and the same."

"You think the person Kitt feared was Kolchov?"

"I am beginning to think so, yes," Arnaud said sharply. "And that brings us to the last question: who killed Kitt and Dimitri? It seems that Kolchov killed Dimitri, but did Kolchov also kill Morris Kitt? At the moment the exact role of Lambert and Dimitri in all this is still not clear. They appear to be against the gang, but appearances can be deceiving.

And there is nothing to prove that the mysterious Kolchov is a member of the gang at all. That ring we found could belong to anyone with the initial 'K.' and it could have been taken from Kolchov by the gang if it is his ring."

"As for Kolchov killing Dimitri, I suppose someone could have been disguised as Kolchov," Ellen Morgan said, her voice slipping, for an instant, into the voice of Margo Lane. "Perhaps Kolchov is really some kind of policeman, and Lambert and Dimitri are the criminals!"

"That, too, is possible, perhaps probable. We have no more than Lambert's words to prove Kolchov exists."

"We have a lot of questions, Mr. Arnaud," Ellen Morgan said, carefully returning to her impersonation.

"Perhaps Gideon Coffin, or that house of his, will supply a few answers," Henry Arnaud said crisply.

The businessman lapsed into silence as the car drove on along the narrow macadam road with the sea distant to the right and the low inland forest to the left. He smoked his cigar oblivious to the beauties of the large island. The car drove on toward Edgartown and Gideon Coffin.

14

EDGARTOWN is a small, picturesque village of white New England houses built small against the hard wind and storms of winter. Once a whaling town, its harbor sheltering the great fleet of tall, thick whaling ships, it is now a village of hotels, rooming houses, and the taverns of the tourists. Its small streets, once echoing to the tread of the hard-bitten whaling men, now ring with the laughter of vacation.

Across the narrow neck of water that separates the inner harbor from the outer harbor of Edgartown is the small island of Chappaquiddick, connected to the main island only by a tiny open ferry operated by one man at a long lever. It was by this ferry that Henry Arnaud and his secretary, the supposed Ellen Morgan, reached Chappaquiddick and drove on along the single road to the giant house of Gideon Coffin.

The house was as Sulu Calin had described it: large, old, a monster on a small hill that overlooked both harbor and

sea. A weed-grown drive led up to the columned entrance of the big house. No one waited on the porch of the giant white house to greet Henry Arnaud arriving for his appointment. This was not overlooked by Arnaud. A man of Gideon Coffin's wealth and age should have had servants to conduct expected guests into the house. There were no servants to be seen, the driveway was overgrown with weeds, the house itself in need of paint. There was an abandoned quality to the house and grounds, an ominous sense of evil hidden behind the deserted facade.

There was no sign of life, and Arnaud parked his car before the door, Ellen Morgan stopping the car directly before the entrance at Arnaud's order. The two got out of the car and walked up the steps to the porch and across to the front door itself. There was no bell. Arnaud raised the knocker and rapped imperiously on the door. The sound echoed away inside the house. Arnaud and Ellen Morgan waited. There was no response from inside the silent house. Impatient, but wary, Arnaud rapped the knocker against the door again. This time, in the distance, there were footsteps. Slow footsteps approaching the door. The door opened.

The old man stood there, bent, his feet encased in soft slippers, an old Navy pea jacket too big on his upper body. The old man blinked, nodded.

"Arnaud, yes? Come in, come in. Follow me. And be quiet, you hear? Be quiet."

The old man turned without looking back to see if Arnaud and Ellen Morgan were following, and shuffled away through the long entrance hall. The old man continued through the hall, and down to the far end. There he turned, grinned wickedly, put his gnarled old finger to his lips, and opened a door. Arnaud and Ellen Morgan entered the room. The old man closed the door and scuttled quickly to a desk piled high with booklets and pamphlets. The entire room was a mass of booklets, pamphlets, papers, folders, all in great stacks. The old man sat at his desk like a withered bird among the debris. He peered up at Arnaud.

"You want to buy my land? Yes?" the old man said, his voice thin and reedy.

"I do, Mr. Coffin," Arnaud said, realizing that this old bag of bones was Gideon Coffin himself. "I pay a fair price, but I won't be swindled."

"Fair price, fair price," the old man cackled like some giant parrot in a blue pea jacket.

Arnaud looked at Ellen Morgan. The woman was staring at the apparently senile old man. Arnaud looked back at Coffin.

"Very well, Mr. Coffin, what I want is about fifty acres of your land in Menemsha. I want to build a hotel, a luxury hotel such as this island has never seen. There is only one hotel at Menemsha, and that is a small one. What I propose will triple the value of your remaining land."

"Triple?" the old man cackled, and then his eyes grew clever. "Hotel at Menemsha, not a bad idea, young fellow. Thought of it myself, long time ago. Too old, too busy. You know about art? That's the thing, art! Never fails a man, art. Hope of the world, only thing that tells the truth. All the rest is lying! Politics, history, systems, business, all lying, all nothing. Art, that's the hope."

"I have heard of your work with The Coffin Press," Arnaud said casually. "I hear you do good work."

"Heard? You heard of me? Ah, that's the hope, yes! All art, I print things about it all. Great work. You know art? Wonderful! What period do you work in?"

"I rather like native work," Arnaud said. "Pre-Columbian especially."

The old man blinked. "Pre-Columbian? Strange, there was another man only recently, yes. I liked him, very nice fellow, a fanatic on Pre-Columbian. Helped me update a pamphlet of mine, yes. Took it with him, I'm sure. Did some work here, don't know where he went. Strange, I forgot he was gone."

The old man babbled. Arnaud listened carefully. The old man must be talking about Morris Kitt! Old Coffin had known Kitt. Then this was where Kitt had been since prison, and this had to be where the printing presses were! If he could get Coffin to tell more about Kitt, he could . . .

His keen ears heard the faint sound, a light click behind him. A door had opened. Someone had come into the littered room. Arnaud stepped toward old Gideon Coffin.

"So you agree, fifty acres of your best land at Menemsha? My secretary here, Miss Morgan, has the papers to show you the exact location I need. I . . ."

The voice was only too familiar. "Mr. Coffin is not interested in selling his land."

Arnaud turned angrily. He showed no recognition of the man behind him: Hubert Adrian.

"Who the devil are you!" Arnaud said testily, his voice hard and cold as suited the sharp businessman he was.

Adrian, in turn, gave no sign of having recognized Henry Arnaud. The elegant gallery owner clearly did not know Arnaud, and did not discern either Lamont Cranston or The Shadow in the gaunt features of the tall businessman. Adrian was not alone, behind him stood the giant Ivan leaning casually against a wall, and stepping to Adrian's side now was his assistant, Penelope Drake.

"It does not matter who I am," Adrian said, "Mr. Coffin does not want to sell to you."

"I don't deal with underlings!" Arnaud snapped. He waved the ugly metal hooks of his artificial hand. "Now get out of here!"

"You listen to me, Mr. . . ." Adrian began.

"Arnaud, Henry Arnaud. And I assure you I get what I want!"

Penelope Drake stepped out. "Henry Arnaud? The financier?"

"I see you know me, young lady," Arnaud snapped. "Perhaps, then, you would be good enough to tell this fool to not interfere in my affairs."

The Drake girl smiled. "Mr. Arnaud is a very famous man, Mr. Adrian. They say he never deals in less than a million dollars, and they say he is ruthless. Are you ruthless, Mr. Arnaud? Do you always get your way no matter how much it costs?"

"Generally, young woman," Arnaud said coldly.

"I think I admire that," Penelope Drake said. "But this time I really am afraid you won't get what you want. Uncle is really not able to deal in business, are you Uncle?"

The old man seemed to wither even smaller. His voice was a whisper as he stared across the room at the giant Ivan who still leaned silently against the wall.

"No," the old man whispered.

"I'm sorry," Penelope Drake said, "but Mr. Adrian is quite right to interfere, I brought him to help my poor uncle. He only acts in Uncle's best interest."

"I do what I can," Hubert Adrian said smoothly. "Now, if you please, Mr. Arnaud?"

Arnaud watched the old man. "A simple deal, Mr. Coffin. Say the word and I can handle these people."

The old man shook. "No . . . no . . . no . . ."

Arnaud nodded. "Very well. Come, Ellen, we can do no more here. We are wasting my time."

Arnaud strode from the room past the impassive Ivan. Ellen Morgan followed him down the long hall and out the front door to the rented car. She got in and drove away down the weed-grown driveway and back onto the highway. The instant the car was out of sight from the house, Arnaud spoke.

"Stop here, Margo!"

It was the voice of The Shadow. The car stopped. A few moments later the shrouded black shape of The Shadow glided from the car and vanished into the heavy underbrush. The sun beat down now in late afternoon, but in the underbrush there was no trace of movement. The Shadow had vanished.

Old Gideon Coffin still sat in the room that was littered with stacks of books and pamphlets. Someone had drawn the curtains across the windows, and the musty room was in semidarkness as the old man sat and stared into space. Old Coffin seemed to hardly breathe.

"You are frightened, Gideon Coffin!"

The eerie voice filled the large room, floated above the stacks of booklets on the hot summer afternoon air. The old man jerked his head up, stared.

"Who's there?!"

The Shadow laughed his cold laugh.

"Where are you?"

The senile cackle was gone. The reedy eccentricity of the voice had vanished. The Shadow watched the old man from the dark part of the room, his black figure blending into the shadows of the stacks of booklets. The old man was not senile! And, then, the old man himself realized what he had done.

"Hee! Hee!" the old man cackled suddenly. "Another of your games, yes! Where are you? I like games, yes... games!"

There was movement in the dim room and from the gloom the figure of The Shadow rose up before Gideon Coffin. The piercing eyes burned from beneath the wide brim of the slouch hat. The hawk nose jutted like a knife toward the old man. In the glow of the fire-opal girasol the face of The Shadow was etched in deep blood red, the great black cloak spreading and fading into the dimness.

"Stop it, Gideon Coffin, you are not senile! You do not need to fear me, I am not one of *them*!"

Gideon Coffin stared upward at the giant apparition towering above him.

"Who are you then?"

"They call me The Shadow, and I fight all evil, Gideon Coffin. I avenge crimes and murders. I am here to help you. They are evil men who hold you captive here!"

The old man looked down. "Go away! Get out!"

"You protect evil men, Gideon Coffin?"

The old man stared down at his desk, his head never moving.

"There are no men here," Coffin said.

The sharp eyes of The Shadow watched the bent head of the old man. His gaze bored into the defenseless neck, but Coffin did not move or raise his eyes.

"I know nothing, I want no part, I wash my hands. There is no one here!" Coffin said in a low, flat voice.

"Hubert Adrian is not here?" The Shadow demanded.

"No, I don't know Hubert Adrian. I want to be left alone! I have my work. I see nothing, I know nothing!"

The old man looked up now. His eyes were flat, glazed. He stared at the shrouded black figure of The Shadow, at the hawk face glowing in the light of the fire-opal girasol. His face was hard, expressionless, like the face of a statue, a frozen stone face that had once been alive, but was dead, had once belonged to a man, but now belonged to something that lived, and breathed, but neither saw nor felt. The Shadow had seen such faces in the war, and before the war. The faces of men in Germany, in Hungary and Rumania, men who would not feel or see or know because if they saw or felt or knew they would have to act, and to act was to risk injury, hardship, even death. Dead men who still walked and caused great evil in the world. Men who washed their hands.

"I know nothing. Leave me alone. They are my guests, her guests, and nothing more!" Coffin cried.

"Kolchov is not here?" The Shadow said in his chilling voice.

The old man blinked, stared for a long minute, and then his head turned down again. Gideon Coffin stared at the top of his own littered desk. His voice, when it came again, was low and a bare croaking whisper.

"I lived too long. Why should I have known? I did not want to know! No! I don't know! I will not know!"

"You fear Kolchov, and yet you will protect Kolchov?"

"Fear? Yes, fear. Fear Kolchov. To know Kolchov is to be afraid, very afraid, too afraid! Kolchov! That is fear itself!"

"Who is Kolchov, Gideon Coffin!" The Shadow demanded, his eyes burning like flames in the dim room. His towering black figure moving closer to hang above the bent head of the old man.

The old man began to shake, his whole frail body in the pea jacket beginning to shiver. Then the old man began to moan, very low, very softly.

"Art is nothing," the old man said. "Art will save nothing. Who will see, listen? The beasts will triumph. Art will die, end, do nothing . . ."

The old man moaned, began to hum, rocking and shivering where he sat behind the strewn desk in the dim room. The Shadow peered down from beneath the wide brim of his slouch hat. The old man had gone into a trance, detached from reality, unaware that he was moaning or humming. And The Shadow realized that sometimes the old man was senile and sometimes as alert as anyone, a matter of moments, slipping in and out of his detached trance, the senility sometimes real and sometimes faked to give him a place to hide. And even The Shadow would get no more from Gideon Coffin today. He left the old man still moaning and humming to himself as his fragile body rocked back and forth behind the desk.

The afternoon sun low now outside the silent old house, The Shadow glided along the corridors and through the vast rooms in search of the presses of The Coffin Press. He found nothing in the rooms on the first floor. The second and third floors of the big house were unlikely places for printing presses. The Shadow found the entrance to the cellar and plunged cautious and silent down into the depths of the giant house. In the second room he found the presses.

The room was small and well appointed. The presses, two small units, gleamed in the dimness. The only light came through a single small window set high at ground level. There were cabinets of type, a small linotype machine, stones for lockup, and skids of paper. It was a fine and complete print shop, mostly old but in excellent condition. Gideon Coffin had bought fine equipment for his work in the field of art. It was a good print shop—but it was not a counterfeiting shop.

In the cool of the cellar The Shadow studied the printing equipment. The paper was not banknote paper. The presses were not color presses, they could be used only for the printing of black and white materials such as booklets. There was not a trace of colored ink anywhere. No, this was not where the bogus money was printed. The Shadow continued his search of the silent cellar.

He found nothing else, not a sign of other presses, no paper, no trace of ink. The floor of the cellar was solid, there were no rooms hidden below. The walls were solid.

The presses were not in the cellar.

Backtracking cautiously up the stairs. The Avenger searched the second and third floors. He found nothing. No presses, no paper, no bogus money.

And no people.

The giant house was empty, deserted, except for the old man rocking in his littered study on the first floor.

Where had they all gone? Where were they? From the top floor, the last light of the afternoon bright over Chappaquidick island, the harbor and sea around it, The Shadow let his keen and piercing eyes search the entire landscape from horizon to horizon. There were small boats on the harbor and at sea. Sails moved across the water. A few last swimmers swam at the edge of the surf. But as far as he could see, The Shadow saw no houses close by, and nothing at all suspicious or unusual. No piers for loading or unloading. No roads that vanished into the woods. No sign of any activity other than that of a normal residential and vacation area.

The eyes of The Avenger darkened in anger. Perhaps a closer search of the area would reveal what was hidden from the upper floor of the big house. But the presses must be close, the vision of The Shadow could not be surpassed on Earth, he would have seen any unusual signs, and an operation as large as the counterfeit ring that could flood the world with bogus bills had to leave signs. He was sure that if the printing equipment were anywhere near the house he would see signs from where he stood. And the presses *had* to be near the house. What other reason could there be for the gang to take over Gideon Coffin, his home and his press? Yet The Shadow could detect nothing.

Puzzled, The Shadow turned from the window and glided down the silent stairs and through the dim house toward where Margo, as Ellen Morgan, waited for the return of The Shadow. Somehow, there was still much that The Shadow

did not know. The presses and the plates had to be somewhere very close. But he could not find them.

15

THE HARBORSIDE INN in Edgartown is a collection of small houses put together into one elegant hotel, and a single large building on the water of the harbor that houses the bar, dance floor, and, upstairs, the restaurant. A small, free form pool occupies the patiolike open court surrounded on three sides by the hotel, and bordered on the fourth side by the docks and the harbor. At this twilight hour of a hot summer day, the pool was closed, it's blue surface shimmering and untouched in the light that came from under the surface. Holiday people passed the pool on their way to drinks and dinner at the bar and restaurant.

A small gate leads into the patiolike grassed area without going through the inn itself. The gate is set between the building of the restaurant and bar, and the first building of the inn itself, and it was through this gate that Ellen Morgan and Henry Arnaud entered and walked quickly to their rooms across the court and overlooking the blue-lighted pool. In his room, Henry Arnaud paced back and forth, his gaunt face set in deep concentration. He smoked one of his long, expensive Mexican cigars.

"It is impossible, Ellen!" Arnaud said in his harsh voice. "Nothing could be hidden that well from The Shadow, I know that. I would have seen *something*, some sign of an operation of that size. Trucks must go in constantly, and yet there were no signs of trucks. Ink is used, paper, metal plates! All must be stored somewhere, and yet there is no building close to that house, Coffin owns the land for a mile!"

"You're sure the house is empty?" Ellen Morgan said.

"Deserted as well as empty of any counterfeiting equipment. Where are they all? Not just Adrian and the others, but the workmen they must have? As far as I could see nothing heavy ever moved in the area except boats being taken down to the water and to the docks. I even thought of a ship, but there is no ship of any size anywhere in sight.

Besides, a ship would be spotted by the local people at once. I'm not sure a ship could even get in close enough to shore."

"You're sure old Gideon Coffin isn't in the gang?" Ellen asked in the silence that followed Arnaud's last words.

"I'm sure," Arnaud said. "I'm sure he had no idea that The Shadow was supposed to be dead. If he isn't innocent, then he is the world's greatest actor. I think he knows a lot, but he has washed his hands of it. Only there is one strange thing, he seems to find Kolchov particularly evil. It is now certain that there is a Kolchov, but I still cannot say just who or what Kolchov is."

"That means the Drake girl must be in the gang," Ellen Morgan said. "She must have brought them to her grand-uncle."

"I'm afraid so, Ellen, and yet, she could have been forced."

"Blackmail?"

"It is possible," Arnaud said. "Still, she seemed to be close to Adrian this afternoon, and did you notice the power she seems to have over her uncle, old Coffin?"

"That's not surprising, is it? I mean, she is his grandniece."

Arnaud chewed his thin and elegant cigar. "I suppose you're right. And I think The Shadow will have to reveal himself again to Adrian and the others. I must smoke them out, cause them to make a mistake. Perhaps the sight of The Shadow risen from a watery grave will make them panic and reveal themselves."

"That could be very dangerous," Ellen Morgan said, her voice suddenly that of her real self, Margo Lane.

"I know," Arnaud said grimly. "I think we will alert the New York Police and the Treasury Agent Ralston. Later, after I have gone, you will call Commissioner Weston and have him send Cardona and Ralston up here. Just tell him that Lamont Cranston thinks he has found the gang's headquarters, and may be in danger."

"I will," the red-headed woman said. "When will you go?"

"In a few hours, when it is very dark. I have a suspicion that darkness alone may bring them out. Meanwhile, Henry Arnaud and his plump secretary might as well enjoy some of the Harborside's fine seafood."

"His plump secretary would be delighted, Mr. Arnaud," the pseudo Ellen Morgan said in Margo's voice.

Arnaud laughed, his laugh very much like the chilling laugh of The Shadow in the now dark night, the last wide purple band of light resting in the south above the sea.

A half an hour later, shaved and showered and wearing his well-cut dinner jacket, Henry Arnaud, the great businessman and financier, conducted his red-headed secretary across the grassed patio area, past the blue-lighted pool, through the bar and up the wide stairs to the fine restaurant of the Harborside Inn. The captain hurried forward, word having been whispered through the hotel that the famous Henry Arnaud was staying at The Harborside.

"A table near the window, if you please, *maitre*," Arnaud said crisply.

"Of course, Mr. Arnaud." The captain bowed, leading the way to a corner table for two set directly over the water of the harbor that still glimmered in the last light of the summer day.

The supposed businessman chatted easily and amiably with his red-headed secretary as if he did not have a care in the world. Anyone watching would have had no idea that behind the gaunt face the mind of The Shadow was preparing for a night of danger. Ellen Morgan matched the nonchalant manner of her chief, sipping her gimlet with smiles and happy words. Arnaud, when the menu was presented, both changed his mind and broke a rule of his own.

"Ah, I see they have a *Mouton*' 53, Ellen. Well, I think we must change from our seafood to a steak. Such a wine is not to be neglected on a vacation."

"Your friend Lamont Cranston would agree," the disguised Margo said in a low voice.

Arnaud smiled, then quickly reassumed his imperious and commanding manner. The waiter took their order for two rare filets, asparagus, and baked potatoes.

"And see that the *Mouton Rothschild* is not treated like a gallon of *vino*, my friend, it is *not* a gallon of *vino*. Carry it gently, open it gently, and I will pour it, understood?"

"Yes sir," the waiter said.

"And find some larger glasses, these are fit for nothing more than orange juice!" Arnaud said testily.

The waiter carried away the small wine glasses so commonly, and erroneously, considered proper for wine. The waiter also carried away the story of Henry Arnaud's nasty and imperious manner, a fact that Arnaud made every effort to foster. Nothing helped a disguise as much as acting the way you were reputed to act. People would remember Henry Arnaud, and never think of Lamont Cranston, or Kent Allard, or, finally, the mysterious Shadow himself whose

mind watched everything now as he planned his foray this night against the most clever gang of counterfeiters.

It was less than a half an hour later that Henry Arnaud had reason to be glad that he could not be connected to Cranston or The Shadow. Before the last glass of wine was finished, Arnaud happened to glance below at the lighted dock through the window. A man stood on the dock looking casually up at the restaurant. The tall, slender man looked straight at Henry Arnaud, and then his eyes passed on without recognition.

It was the pseudo art critic Jonathan Lambert.

Henry Arnaud did not look at his secretary as he spoke. "I think our little holiday dinner is over, Margo."

"I saw him. Is it Lambert?" the disguised Margo said. She had not yet seen Lambert, but the man below on the dock in the night fitted The Shadow's description of the mysterious man.

"Yes," Arnaud said, smiling as if he had just told a joke. "He seems even more skilled than I thought, he has followed the trail here. Perhaps he can save The Shadow much trouble tonight. He may well know where the gang is hiding."

"You will follow him?" the plump red-headed woman asked.

"I will. Come, I'll pay and we had better hurry. Lambert is no fool, he will not wait for trouble. He must be looking for someone here, or he would not have showed himself. I will pay, and we will both walk casually back to our rooms. Then you will contact Burbank and have him alert Ralston and Cardona to come up here."

"Now?"

"Now," Arnaud said, still smiling as if their conversation were the most casual in the world.

The gaunt businessman stood up and helped his plump secretary to her feet. Together they sauntered casually across the restaurant and down the wide stairs. They went back through the bar and across the grassed patio past the shimmering blue pool to their rooms. Then the red-headed secretary found herself suddenly alone. Arnaud had vanished without a sound.

A few moments later Jonathan Lambert, his observation of the dock area of The Harborside Inn having, apparently, been useless, left the area of the hotel through the small side gate. The supposed art critic walked along the main street of Edgartown apparently inspecting the goods offered in the

many small shops that lined the street. Unseen behind Lambert, Henry Arnaud trailed the air critic in his slow progress up the street. Observing closely, Arnaud soon realized that Lambert was not looking at the goods on display along the narrow street, the critic was watching the faces of the people. The slow procession of the two men continued along the bustling resort street, among men in gaudy jackets and women trim in tight slacks and shorts. The pretty women displayed the curves of their tanned and healthy bodies, and the men who watched the women ambled easily and happily in the summer night all unaware of the grim chase that was going on in their midst.

Lambert's search was careful and thorough, missing neither shops nor bars. Arnaud followed. From time to time Lambert glanced at his watch. It was nearly ten o'clock when Lambert looked at his watch once more, turned, and quickly walked from the bar-restaurant, The Shanty. Arnaud followed. Lambert turned left from The Shanty and walked rapidly in the warm night toward the municipal parking lot near the dock of The Harborside Inn. Arnaud realized at once that Lambert had an appointment and was walking to his car. Arnaud's car was parked two blocks away in front of The Harborside Inn. But there was only one road out of Edgartown, and the night streets of the resort village were so crowded with walkers that Lambert's progress would have to be slow. Arnaud waited until he saw Lambert get into a small blue convertible with a New York license plate: NG 86005. Then the gaunt businessman hurried along the streets to his own car.

The single road out of Edgartown led to the north. The town had designed its one way streets so that all traffic had to move slowly toward this single main road to leave the town at all. At the northern edge of the village there was a fork in the highway. The right fork led to Oak Bluffs along the water road. The left fork led to the other end of the island through Chilmark and West Tisbury to Menemsha and Gay Head. Arnaud had only to reach the fork before Lambert to be sure of not losing the mysterious art critic. He reached the fork with two minutes to spare. The small, blue convertible with the New York license plate, NG 86005, arrived at the fork and turned left toward the far end of the island. Arnaud, waiting in the shadows of a side street, pulled out to follow. He drove as only he could, with his lights out, far

enough back to be unseen, but close enough to see the car ahead with his night vision.

The blue convertible drove only a few short blocks on the highway toward Menemsha. Then it turned sharply left and began to move faster on the dark road that led only to the long South Beach that bordered the open sea. The blue convertible raced through the night, its headlight beams probing like long fingers into the darkness. The long road was dark and deserted, few houses lining its black length. Arnaud remained close and yet not too close to the blue convertible. Lambert was driving very fast as if very familiar with the road, and Arnaud realized that the mysterious art critic had driven this road before. Soon the low dunes loomed ahead in the night as the cars approached South Beach. To the right The Dunes Motel blazed with light, but along the wide beach itself all was dark.

Just before the road ended at the low dunes of sand and tough beach grass, the blue convertible turned again. It entered a side road that paralleled the beach on this side of the dunes. Dust flew up in the beams of the convertible's headlights. The road was a dirt and sand road. Arnaud turned into the side road behind Lambert. The blue car ahead continued on past the lighted Dunes Motel. Soon the motel was behind, and all around the night was pitch black and without a moon. Arnaud slowed down, lagging farther behind. On this side road there were no other cars and even driving without lights on a moonless night he might be seen by Lambert in the car ahead. He stopped and leaned out to listen. The dirt road did not lead on much farther, he, too, being familiar with this part of the island from previous vacation trips. For a few more minutes he heard the motor of the car ahead. Then there was silence, and the headlights of the blue convertible went out some five hundred yards ahead.

Arnaud got out of his car and moved cautiously through the night. He skirted the road itself, Lambert was not fool enough to meet someone without precautions being taken to prevent anyone surprising him. He moved silently through the tough bushes and sharp beach grass until he reached the parked and darkened blue convertible. The car was parked in the shadow of a small beach shack. The shack was deserted and grey, one of the scattered shacks used mostly in the spring and fall by the surf fishermen who came to battle the great striped bass in the annual derby, or to fight cold and

rain and heavy seas for the glory of catching the great bass alone. Arnaud listened intently, but there was no sound of movement or talking inside the dark shack. He looked around and saw the narrow trail through the high beach grass. The trail led to a high dune at the edge of the South Beach itself. Arnaud tensed. On the top of the high dune a man stood vaguely visible in the dark night.

Arnaud could not be sure the figure was Lambert, but with his keen night vision, the alter-ego of The Shadow could see that the figure was a tall, slender man. The man appeared to be gazing out to sea. The Shadow's gaunt alter-ego slipped along the trail toward the dunes. Before he neared the man on the dune, he moved off to the right, circled, and came up on the dune from the right. Arnaud moved low and silently, his cautious figure invisible from the dune. He lay in the sand and tough beach grass where he could observe the man on the dune and also have a clear view out to sea in the direction the shadowy figure on the dune was looking. On the high dune the man, who was now clearly Jonathan Lambert to the keen eyes of The Shadow's businessman identity, did not take his eyes from the ocean that broke lazily on the sand only a few feet away in the warm summer night. Lambert was holding something low and close to his side that Arnaud could not quite make out.

Time seemed to stand still in the warm and silent night as Arnaud lay hidden on the sand. Lambert never moved or took his gaze from the sea. To Arnaud, where the alter-ego of The Shadow lay rigid in the sand, the ticking of his watch seemed as loud as a hammer striking on steel. Then Lambert moved. And Arnaud saw it.

Far out to sea, invisible from shore to any normal eyes, was a large boat. Not a ship, but a very large boat like some kind of fishing boat. A large, sea-going trawler! It was the trawler Lambert had been watching for. The mysterious pseudo art critic could not see the trawler, it was much too far out for normal eyes on a dark night. But Lambert did not have to see it. As Arnaud watched he saw the faint light blinking on and off in signal. The trawler was signaling shoreward. Lambert raised his hand and the object in his hand revealed itself as a long flashlight. Shielded from the sides, the flashlight could be seen only out on the sea as Lambert began to flash return signals. The signaling of the lights was brief. Then there was darkness again, and the disguised Shadow continued to wait. Another half an hour passed.

When they came they seemed to appear out of the sea itself. Two men in a rubber boat. They ran the boat up onto the sand, and the shorter of the two men began to walk toward the dunes. Lambert left the dune and walked to meet the man. They met just below the dune not fifty feet from the ultra-keen hearing of Henry Arnaud. The short man from the trawler spoke first. He spoke in Russian!

"You have a report?"

"Yes," Lambert said, the art critic speaking also in Russian now.

Arnaud nodded grimly to himself—he had been right, Lambert was a Russian agent of some kind. The Shadow, and his alter-egos, understood and spoke most of the languages of the world. He had no trouble hearing the report of Jonathan Lambert.

"Well!" the short man snapped.

"*Da, da!* Be patient Comrade. I connected the boxes from The Coffin Press to this island, and came here. I found where The Coffin Press is located, in an old house on a smaller island. I inspected this place and found nothing. There are presses, but of no value for counterfeiting. The house itself was empty but for an old man who is senile. I have looked, but I have found so far no trace of where the operation is located. I have also failed to locate any of the group from The Adrian Gallery."

"In brief, Comrade Agent, you have found nothing!" the short man snapped. "Not even Kolchov!"

"But I am looking, Comrade Leader, and I will find," Lambert said. "And I will know Kolchov."

"Be sure you do, Comrade," the short man said. "We must have him, you understand? This time we must not lose him! And, too, we must stop this gang of criminals for good. Kolchov has already killed Dimitri! What men I have, to allow Kolchov to defeat and kill them!"

"Kolchov is well-trained, Comrade, and most deadly."

"You are well-trained! Have we wasted our time and money? Find that printing unit, that is where he will be, yes?"

"I will find it, *da!*"

His ears concentrating to hear at the distance and in the foreign tongue, Henry Arnaud turned too late on the sand. The men were upon him. Two men, both wearing the shining rubber suits of scuba divers, their air cylinders on their backs, goggles on their eyes, and deadly spear guns leveled at Arnaud's chest.

"Up!" one said in Russian.

"Stand up," the second commanded in English. "Quickly!"

Arnaud stood up. The two men prodded him forward toward Lambert and the short man. The short man stared at Arnaud.

"Do you know him?" the short man said to Lambert.

"No," Lambert said. "I have not seen this one before."

"A policeman, *da*?" the short man said still speaking in the Russian they did not know. Arnaud understood. "We kill him."

Lambert studied the gaunt face of Arnaud. The agent's eyes looked at the broken nose, the drooping eye, and the artificial arm with its ugly hooks.

"I think not a policeman, *nyet*," Lambert said. "A member of the gang, perhaps. Remember, Comrade Leader, if Kolchov leads this gang I am known to them, and my activities would be of great interest to them. If Kolchov is here on this island, I may have been seen and this man sent to watch me."

"So? Then he must die. Now! Here!" the short man said.

"*Nyet*! No! A member of the gang would know much! Take him out to the ship and make him talk. You know how to make a man talk I think, Comrade Leader?"

The short man smiled a macabre smile. "*Da*. I know. He will speak in many volumes. Take him!"

The last was an order to the two men who had surprised Arnaud. The businessman alter-ego of The Shadow was marched off toward the rubber boat. He went silently and without protest. Already he had been careless again. He should have guessed that the Russians would not come in on their rubber boat unprotected. The two scuba divers had swum in beside the boat and circled to guard the beach. A clever precaution. Two unseen swimmers beneath the water, leaving the water at a distance and unseen to search the area for such an observer as Arnaud. Now they prodded their captive down to the rubber boat. Moments later the short man returned and the boat was pushed off into the sea.

The trip to the trawler was slow, and Arnaud made no attempt to escape. The scuba divers swam close to the boat, their spear guns ready. The short man held a long pistol. When they reached the trawler, they pushed Arnaud below and into a small cell. Alone, the gaunt businessman listened. The trawler was getting underway. Quickly, Arnaud reached into the secret pockets of his clothes. An instant later The

Shadow used his hidden picklock and the black garbed figure glided silently along the empty corridors of the trawler and up onto the dark deck.

On the trawler voices laughed somewhere. But The Shadow had no time for the men on the trawler. Already the ship was moving out to sea. On shore, far off and faint, a light glowed where the small shack was near Lambert's car. That would be where Jonathan Lambert was hiding on the island.

Soundless and unseen, The Shadow slipped over the side of the trawler and vanished into the dark sea. It would be some time before he was missed, and on shore there was no time to waste.

16

JONATHAN LAMBERT worked in the cabin. The tall, slender art critic with the small mustache worked on something far removed from art. In his hands was a strange-looking gun. Long-barreled and thick-handled, the gun was both ugly and deadly. Lambert worked with concentration and heard nothing until a faint breath of air brushed across his face. He looked up. He saw nothing in the room that was lighted by only the single lamp on the table where Lambert worked. He blinked and stared around at the shadows.

The eerie laugh came from somewhere close by.

"So, you are a Russian agent, Jonathan Lambert," a cold voice said softly. "What kind of agent are you?"

The Russian agent narrowed his eyes and raised the pistol in his hand.

"You know that will do no good, Jonathan Lambert!" the unseen voice mocked. "You know my power!"

And from a patch of black near the door the face of The Shadow appeared bathed in the red glow of the fire-opal girasol. His hawk nose menaced Lambert from beneath his hard and piercing eyes. The black-shrouded figure seemed to grow up from the dark itself as Lambert watched. Lambert neither flinched nor paled. The Russian agent was not a man who was afraid of much. Lambert smiled at the cloaked figure before him.

"Well now, we meet again," Lambert said.

"We meet again, there is no escape from The Shadow!" the Avenger mocked.

"The Shadow? An appropriate name. I should have known you would be somewhere near. Well, as you say, I know some of your power, and I will not be so easily overcome this time." And the Russian agent leveled his pistol, the strange, thick-handled weapon. "This time I will shoot the instant I feel my will being overcome. If that fails, this gun is quite special. You see, I press this small button. Now, if the gun falls or is even lowered, it will release a deadly gas. A fatal gas this time, my Shadow friend!"

Lambert held the thick-handled pistol steady after pressing the small button. The Shadow watched Lambert. The Avenger had no doubt that Lambert spoke the truth. He had seen some of the man's skill and specially designed weapons. Lambert would not be afraid to die if it became necessary. And Lambert would indeed shoot the instant the power of The Shadow began to reach him.

"Now," Lambert said, "tell me who you work for, Shadow?"

"I work for no one, Jonathan Lambert! I avenge all evil. The Shadow knows the evil that lurks in the hearts of men!"

"Freelance? Well, that is interesting. A very romantic middle-class notion. We prefer the more organized and scientific methods, the large organization. Still, in this work much might be said for the individual approach I think. And, I take it, you too are after this gang of counterfeiters?"

"I am!" the shrouded figure declared in the dim room.

Lambert nodded. "I guessed as much when I heard that Dimitri's banknotes, the counterfeit notes we carried as samples, had found their way to the police. A certain Lamont Cranston turned them in, right? We have our ways of finding out things, that is one advantage of a large organization. We both seem to know this Cranston. He works with you, or for you?"

"He does," The Shadow said.

Again Lambert nodded. Then the tall, slender Russian leaned toward the black shrouded figure hunched in the dim light above him like a great bat at the edge of the light from the lamp. The Russian hesitated, and then, suddenly, pressed the button on the thick handle of his strange pistol.

"I turn off my escape weapon," Lambert said slowly. "I think we must work together. I do not yet lower my pistol, a

man must not give up all weapons. But let us think, we are both after the same criminals. We are on the same side."

The Shadow watched the slender man. He did not trust Lambert, and there was still the question of just why Lambert and his associates were not working with the American Government if they were also after the counterfeit ring. But the Avenger had no reason not to listen to Lambert's proposition. He could still learn much that was unclear in this case.

"Perhaps we are, Jonathan Lambert," The Shadow said. "Evil men hurt all men in the end."

"Of course," Lambert agreed. "We both want to stop this gang and destroy its leaders. I deeply regret that I was forced to question your Mr. Cranston so forceably. Still, that is now in the past, correct? One breaks some eggs accidentally at times in this work of ours."

"Why do I need your help?" The Shadow said. "Perhaps I have already all the help I need."

Lambert smiled. "No, if you had located the headquarters or the real leader you would not be here talking to me. I do not say that you could not stop this gang alone given time, or that I could not locate the leader given time, but together perhaps we can save much time in ending this gang and capturing its leader."

"And capturing the murderer of Morris Kitt and your partner," The Shadow said.

"That, too," Lambert said, "if you insist."

"You do not care about the murders? Murder can never go unavenged, Lambert," The Shadow intoned sharply.

"Kitt was a thief and criminal," Lambert said, "and Dimitri knew the risks. There are more important matters."

"Even a thief cannot be murdered, Jonathan Lambert," The Shadow said coldly. "A criminal is a human being."

"We have different views on that, I'm afraid," Lambert said. "A criminal is an enemy of the community, and any way he is ended is good. The other view is sentimentality!"

The hawk face of The Shadow watched the tall, slender Russian agent. He had heard such views before, and they were very dangerous. The ultimate of evil was done in the name of safety and society by men with those views. Men who had no idea but to protect their community, who had no idea they were doing evil. A criminal is an enemy of the community and a danger. But it is not enough to prove that a man is a criminal to destroy him, a free people must also prove the danger. Free men are not judged on what they are,

but on what they do. It is too easy for men with power to decide that anyone who opposes them is a criminal. Too easy and far too common in a frightened world, as The Shadow so well knew. And his piercing eyes burned as he watched the Russian agent.

"But we will discover the killer, or killers, if that is what you want. I want the gang," Jonathan Lambert said. "They have flooded the free People's Republics with their false money, it is very dangerous to us. We know they are equally active here in the West. We must stop them."

"How did you trace them to the Adrian Gallery?" The Shadow asked.

"Pure luck, I admit it," Lambert said. "There was a fire at a gallery in Kiev where some of the shipments had gone. The fireman noted that one of the burned crates had hollow boards. We are careful in Russia, such a thing is reported to the police, and the police alerted us. We had no proof that the counterfeit had been shipped in those crates, but we came to New York anyway. We watched the Adrian Gallery. Then I traced the activities of the Adrian to this island. Now I can find nothing. It is my thought that this Gideon Coffin may be the real leader."

"Coffin?" The Shadow said in surprise. "No, I think not."

"You have found this Gideon Coffin then?" Lambert said.

"I have, and so have you," The Shadow said.

"I have? No, I..."

"The old man in the big house is Gideon Coffin," The Shadow said. "You did not know?"

"That old man? No, I did not ask questions, I merely searched. So, the old man? Why can he not be the leader?"

"He is old and senile most of the time, he is very afraid," The Shadow said.

"Senility and fear can be an act," Lambert said.

"Perhaps," The Shadow said, "but Gideon Coffin is a rich man, a lover of art, why would he become a criminal? No, I think that Wolfgang Grobut may be the real leader."

The Shadow watched Lambert closely from beneath his broad slouch hat as he said this. Lambert was startled. For a split second the Russian agent showed his surprise. The Lambert smiled. The Russian nodded as if there was some joke on himself.

"So, you do know of Grobut. I am surprised, I admit it, and you are clever. You trapped me, right? Yes, I thought

that only we had identified Grobut. He is known then to your authorities?"

"No, our police do not know Grobut, but The Shadow knows," the cloaked Avenger said from the edge of light where he hovered like a great bird of prey. "What do you know of Grobut?"

"I will tell you, we work together," Lambert said. "He was very secret, we know that only British Intelligence never guessed his existence until one of our agents in Germany during the war actually found him. He was a fine engraver, trained in the Bauhaus in the twenties. During the war the Nazis used his talent to make counterfeit Allied money. Our agent secured some of his work, and a picture of him. But after the war he vanished and was said to be dead. We did not think that Wolfgang Grobut was dead.

"He had been well hidden and well guarded. We knew he was a clever man. For years we searched for him, followed every clue. Grobut had been responsible for much trouble with his work, and he had killed some of our people. Two years ago we thought we had located him. He was a dangerous man, so we sent one of our best agents to bring him to us. The agent did not bring Grobut back. Both Grobut and our agent vanished!

"Then the false money began to appear in our countries. We knew it was the work of Grobut immediately. There were other bills made by other engravers, but it was Grobut's work that we recognized. His work is so good it is very dangerous. So I was sent to stop this gang. We thought Grobut had killed our agent, but now we do not think so. They are working together!"

"And your agent is Kolchov?" The Shadow said.

"Yes," Lambert said, "Kolchov! A turncoat! A trusted agent of Smersh in those days. One of our most valuable and least known, that was why we sent Kolchov. Deadly as a black widow spider, and very clever. We should have known that Grobut could not have killed Kolchov. And it was so easy for Kolchov to defect. So very easy. So few knew Kolchov on sight, and none knew the real name of Kolchov outside the Kremlin itself!"

The burning gaze of The Shadow studied the tall, slender Russian agent. Something Lambert had said seemed odd. His choice of words. So very easy to defect, and few knew Kolchov on sight. But *some* knew Kolchov on sight, then. Dimitri had known Kolchov. The black shrouded Avenger

gazed at Lambert from the edge of the shadows in the dim cottage room.

"So easy to defect?" The Shadow asked.

Lambert shrugged. "Kolchov is not a Russian. Many of our best agents are not Russian, and not of any of our countries. That is what makes them so valuable to us."

"What is Kolchov?"

"I do not know," Lambert said. "That I was not told."

"But you know Kolchov? You and Dimitri both knew him on sight?" The Shadow demanded.

Lambert hesitated, paused. The Shadow felt that again the Russian was surprised. This time Lambert covered better. There was only the slight pause, the hesitation, before the Russian agent answered The Shadow's question. Lambert blinked as he looked at The Shadow where the Avenger stood with his hawk face glowing in the red light of the fire-opal girasol.

"Yes," Lambert said quickly when he did speak, "we both knew Kolchov on sight. That is why we were sent here. That and our English. We are of the English Section."

"And you think that Kolchov may be the leader?" The Shadow demanded.

Lambert nodded. "I think yes."

"Then why have you not reported this to the police?"

"I have not yet found Kolchov. And we want the traitor for ourselves."

The Shadow recalled the conversation between Lambert and the short man who was obviously Lambert's superior. Lambert had told the same thing to his superior—that he had not yet found Kolchov, although Lambert knew Kolchov on sight! Suddenly the eyes of The Shadow burned with a greater fire. He moved, turned toward the door of the cabin. His voice, when he spoke again, was quick and sharp.

"Then we must find this Kolchov," The Shadow said. "I think we must visit the house of Gideon Coffin again. The answer is somewhere near there."

"I agree. We will go together?"

But The Shadow never worked with anyone. His powers were his alone, and he would never reveal the secrets of his work, the methods by which he battled evil.

"No, you will go with Lamont Cranston. I have other work to do. You will meet Cranston at the Starbuck's Neck lighthouse, he will have a boat. Both you and Cranston are

known to the gang, an approach by water may surprise them."

"Good," Lambert said. "I'll be there in two hours."

"See that you are," The Shadow said.

Without another word the black-garbed Avenger moved slowly backward and was gone. For a time Jonathan Lambert stared at the place The Shadow had been. But The Shadow had vanished without either sound or motion, as if he had melted into and through the walls of the cabin themselves. Lambert turned back to the table. He drew some small flat objects from the table drawer and began to work over them.

Lamont Cranston knew the risk he took. Crouched low in the shadow of the squat lighthouse on Starbuck's Neck in the outer harbor of Edgartown, Cranston watched the dory coming in to shore with Sulu Calin rowing it. He was supposed to be dead, and he did not trust Jonathan Lambert. But he had to risk the reappearance of Lamont Cranston, Henry Arnaud was supposed to be safely on the Soviet trawler, and Lambert knew that. It was doubtful that Lambert had contacted the trawler again. Also, Lambert did not know that Cranston was thought dead by the gang, and Lambert knew Cranston and might work honestly with the socialite.

All this Cranston considered as he waited for Sulu to reach shore, and for Lambert to arrive at Starbuck's Neck. Back at The Harborside Inn Margo waited for the arrival of Ralston and Detective Joe Cardona. She had orders to keep them with her and wait for word from Cranston. He had a strong conviction that the case was coming to a critical point. From the conversation he had overheard at the Adrian Gallery he knew that the gang was alarmed at all the attention being given to them and to the murder of Morris Kitt. They would certainly go into hiding soon. In a way Cranston could not understand what they were waiting for. If they were waiting—if they had not already gone into some hiding place. This was possible, but he did not think they would have left old Gideon Coffin behind alone. And if they had already gone into hiding, that was all the more reason for The Shadow to try to pick up their trail as soon as possible, and now Cranston waited impatiently for Jonathan Lambert.

Sulu Calin reached shore, and the stocky lobsterman drew

the dory half onto the land. At almost the same instant Jonathan Lambert appeared at the small lighthouse from the landward side across the narrow wooden walkway. Cranston wasted no time with words. He motioned for Lambert to get into the dory. Lambert got in. Cranston and Sulu pushed the boat off and jumped in. Cranston watched the harbor ahead as Sulu rowed to his lobster boat waiting at anchor. Soon the boat was underway, and Cranston and Lambert crouched together in the bow watching the sea ahead.

The lobster boat moved unlighted except for its running lights. Sulu knew the waters around the Vineyard the way a city man knows the streets in his neighborhood. Soon they were out of the lower Edgartown Harbor and in the open sea. In a few more minutes the darkened lobster boat turned in toward the shore of Chappaquiddick Island and slowed down. They passed close to where Gideon Coffin's land came down to the water's edge. And they continued on to lull the suspicions of anyone who might be watching from shore. Some half a mile farther along the shore of Chappaquiddick Island, the lobster boat stopped and the dory was lowered. Cranston, Lambert and Sulu Calin jumped down into the dory.

"Tell your men to get out of here fast," Cranston said to Sulu.

"They'll stand off to pick us up," Sulu said.

"No! Much too dangerous, Sulu. We have no idea what we may run into. We don't need to be picked up. If anything goes wrong we can get back to Edgartown by land."

"All right, Mr. Cranston," the stocky lobsterman said.

Lambert had said nothing the whole time. The Russian agent sat in the bow of the dory staring in toward land. Now Lambert looked back, impatient to be moving. Cranston nodded to Sulu, and the lobster man began to row after he had instructed his crew to return to Edgartown. The stocky islander rowed powerfully with the alternate strokes of each hand used often by men accustomed to rowing in the heavy waves of the open sea. The dory made almost no noise and soon neared land. As they touched, Lambert leaped out and pulled the boat up on shore. Cranston and Sulu followed. The three men disappeared into the thick bushes that lined the shore behind the beach.

They made their way swiftly but cautiously toward the big house of Gideon Coffin. The night was warm, but a chill

breeze had begun to blow from the sea at this late hour. They crossed a fence and were on the land of the eccentric old man. Now they moved even more carefully toward the house itself. Cranston's keen ears heard the men.

"Down!" Cranston hissed.

They flattened out in the shelter of some thick bushes. The men came down a wide path that led back toward the beach at the end of Coffin's land where it bordered the open sea. There were five men carrying boxes, and, behind them and carrying only a wicked looking Sten submachinegun, the giant Ivan. The six men passed on down the path toward the beach. At least Cranston now knew that the gang was still in the area. He motioned to Sulu and Lambert to continue toward the house. At the house four more men emerged carrying boxes and walked toward the beach. Cranston motioned for Lambert and Sulu to remain where they were, and then crept up close to the house. He circled from window to window around the large house. In the window of old Coffin's littered study he saw that the old man was not there. Two windows farther on he watched cautiously.

It was some kind of office, and in the light from a single desk lamp he saw Hubert Adrian talking to a man he could not make out. Adrian seemed angry. The elegant gallery owner was talking furiously to the other man who stood just beyond the circle of light. Then the unseen man moved and came into the light. The Turk, Turhan Kemel! The Turk seemed to be protesting, his swarthy face pale in the room. The Turk was as angry as Adrian. For an instant, as he watched, Cranston thought the two men were about to fight. Then Adrian suddenly stalked from the room. Kemel stared after Adrian for a moment, and then slowly followed the gallery owner from the room.

There was silence now, and Cranston resumed his slow circuit of the big house. He found nothing more. The two upper floors of the house showed no light at any of the windows. There was no further sound in the house even to Cranston's keen ears. It appeared once again abandoned, and Cranston rejoined the waiting Lambert and Sulu Calin. In the shelter of the bushes he told them what he had seen. Lambert seemed surprised.

"You're sure the other man was the Turk, Kemel?" Lambert asked.

"I'm sure," Cranston said. "Didn't they pass this way?"

"No," Lambert said.

"No one else came this way, Mr. Cranston," Sulu Calin said.

Cranston pondered there in the dark near the big old house. He was considering the Russian agent. He remembered that Turhan Kemel was rumored to be a Communist. Lambert had said that the mysterious Kolchov was not a Russian, nor from any Iron Curtain country. Cranston had the strong conviction that Lambert had not told him quite everything that was on the Russian agent's mind. But, now, he was more concerned with the activities of the gang at the house.

"There seems to be a lot of traffic toward the beach," Cranston said. "Perhaps we had better see what it is."

Lambert nodded agreement, and the three men moved silently through the heavy undergrowth toward the beach on the open sea side of the island. The sound of the calm surf grew heavier as they approached the beach. Cranston lay flat on the sand and peered out through the bushes.

The men on the beach stood or sat on the boxes they had dropped to the sand. They all stared out toward the sea. They smoked and talked and seemed to be waiting for something. With his super-keen night vision, Cranston looked out to sea in the same direction the men on the beach were looking. He saw nothing. Beside him Lambert swore softly in Russian. Sulu Calin made no sound as he stared out to sea.

Cranston was the first to see the faint luminescent trail on the surface of the sea. It was close in to shore and coming closer very slowly. Cranston could not see what made the trail on the water. He strained his super-vision. Before he could decide what was making the very slowly moving trail of light, there was a sudden loud sound like some great sea animal blowing.

The sea began to boil up. Not fifty yards from shore. The night was filled with the sound of blowing air and water, and the water boiled white in the dark. A black shape appeared in the center of the boiling white water. The shape breached, blew, streamed water like silver in the night, and settled low on the calm surface. A tall, bobbing black shape. Sulu Calin was the first of the three to speak.

"Not fifty yards off! They must have dredged a channel!" Sulu whispered.

Lambert swore in his guttural Russian.

Lamont Cranston studied the shape of the small submarine. It was small where it now rested motionless on the sea, its conning tower clearly visible. Cranston recognized its type at once—a German U-boat from World War II!!

17

AN HOUR had passed, and the three men in the bushes at the edge of the beach had not moved. The old U-boat still lay black in the water. The boxes from the beach had been loaded aboard the submarine, and the men had gone aboard, too. Now a small rubber boat rowed in from the U-boat. Two men rowed, and two passengers sat in the boat. Cranston saw that the passengers were Avis Adrian and the giant Ivan. The two men from the submarine remained with the rubber boat. Avis Adrian and Ivan walked up the beach and vanished along the path toward the big house.

Nothing else moved in the dark night.

Cranston spoke low. "We must get aboard that submarine."

"You're thinking what I'm thinking?" Lambert whispered. "The printing plant, the whole works, is on the submarine!"

"It has to be," Cranston said. "Very clever. They use this island as a base for shipments in and out, but they print on the U-boat. If necessary they can ship the stuff to the Adrian Gallery from almost anywhere!"

"Let's find out," Lambert said.

Cranston nodded. The Russian agent was a man of determination and courage. It was a great risk to board the submarine, but there was no other way to be sure, or to stop the gang. Once the submarine was gone it could be years, perhaps never, before they could locate it again. Cranston turned to Sulu Calin.

"You remain here, Sulu. If anything goes wrong, get back to The Harborside and contact Margo, she will understand."

Cranston had no intention of letting Lambert know that the Treasury Agent and the police were close at hand.

"Aye," the stocky lobsterman said.

Without another wasted word, Cranston and Lambert left their hiding place and moved slowly through the bushes away from where the two men from the submarine lounged near their rubber boat. The beach curved here, and when they had reached a point where they were out of sight from the men on the beach, Cranston and Lambert left the bushes and ran low across the sand to the edge of the sea. They entered the water silently and began to swim.

The water was warm and the sea calm. They swam with short, slow strokes. A silent breast stroke to keep the U-boat in sight before them as they approached. On the U-boat two faint glows of light showed that the conning tower hatch was open, as was the rear loading hatch near the stern where the sleek U-boat tapered into the water. The figure of a man leaned darkly on the rail high up on the conning tower. A second figure sat on the deck near the after hatch. Without speaking, Lambert indicated that he would handle the man near the after hatch, and Cranston would watch the man high on the conning tower.

They came in toward the submarine from the seaward side. On the conning tower the single guard was staring fixedly landward. The guard at the after hatch was seated with his back toward the sea, apparently half asleep and facing the land. Cranston trod water near the submerged aftersection of the U-boat, the small waves breaking over the hidden hull. Lambert moved away toward the U-boat. Cranston watched the man on the conning tower. The man was concerned only with the land, his figure never moving as he stared landward as if waiting for something or someone. He did not move, neither seeing nor hearing, as the guard on the rear suddenly seemed to vanish into the sea itself.

There was a low hiss, and Cranston swam ahead. Lambert floated near the U-boat with the body of the guard in his arms. The man had been quickly, coldly strangled with a thin steel wire. Lambert was an expert. Now the Russian agent indicated that he would tie the body to the stern of the submarine with a length of stout wire. Cranston nodded, a floating body would be a complete giveaway if seen by the man on the conning tower. Lambert stroked away to the stern of the submarine and sank from sight. Cranston waited, his eyes on the man high on the conning tower. Soon Lambert returned and the two men climbed up the side and

onto the deck of the submarine. Unseen, they slipped below through the after hatch.

They were in the after torpedo room, bare now and stripped of its torpedoes. Cautiously, Cranston led Lambert forward along the narrow companionway. There was neither a sign of any crew nor the sound of any voices here at the stern of the old U-boat. And they had not gone more than fifteen feet along the corridor before they came to a second watertight door. Cranston knew enough about U-boat construction to know that this door should not have been where it was. Lambert knew also. The Russian agent looked at Cranston. The socialite alter-ego of The Shadow approached the door. He turned the handwheel and the door opened slowly and silently on its well-oiled hinges. Cranston and Lambert stepped warily through the door and stopped.

The secret of the U-boat was before them.

One enormous room. The entire interior of the submarine had been torn out and in its place was a single large room. A room full of printing presses, paper, ink barrels, packing equipment, and everything else required for a complete and highly productive counterfeiting plant! They had found the plant of the gang of international counterfeiters.

"Look!" Lambert hissed.

On each press there was an engraved plate inked and ready to run. Each set of plates was a bill of some country. The fourth and fifth presses had plates glistening with green ink, and the paper ready to be fed was perfect American banknote paper, the small colored fibres clearly visible. On the sixth press the plates were in shades of blue and faint red, and the paper had a single thin strand of pure silver running through it—paper for English pound notes! In the far corner there were neat stacks of completed bills, all carefully cut and ready for final shipment. The large room looked like a room in some national mint!

"It's a bigger operation than even I thought," Cranston said.

Lambert nodded. "Enough to wreck the economy of small nations. And enough to cause a lot of damage even to Russia! They must be destroyed! Take the plates, Cranston. Smash them!"

"No, too much noise," Cranston said. "A deep scratch on each plate will do."

"Of course," Lambert said. "And then we must find the engravers."

The two men set to work. Lambert went down the row of presses on the right, and Cranston down the row on the left. With sharp pieces of metal found in the room, Cranston gouged a deep scratch across each printing plate, ruining the engraving. He was on the fourth press, and saw Lambert starting on his third, when the man entered the large room.

Cranston dove for cover behind the nearest press.

Across the room Lambert had vanished.

The man walked through the room and stopped at a long table halfway down the length of the room. The man turned on a bright lamp and stood looking down at the table. He was short and heavy, with a grey beard and deep-set eyes. As he stood staring down at the table with intense concentration he absently took a stubby pipe from his pocket, filled it with some black tobacco, lighted it, and began to smoke. Then the man sat down and picked up a small tool. Cranston realized that the tool was an engraving tool. He moved closer to the man. But Lambert had moved first. Suddenly, the tall, slender Russian agent was standing behind the bearded man, a small pistol in his hand. It was the same small Beretta Cranston had seen in Lambert's hand once before.

"Grobut!" Lambert hissed at the bearded man.

Cranston stood up and walked toward Lambert as the bearded man whirled in his seat.

"So, Wolfgang Grobut," Lambert said, "at last!"

The short, bearded man looked at Lambert, and then at Cranston who had just walked up. The bearded man shrugged.

"*Ach, ja*, it must come. You are police, *hein*?"

"In a way," Lambert said with a thin smile. "You have led us a long chase, Grobut, but we have you now."

The bearded engraver shrugged. "If you survive to get me out of the *unterseeboot*."

"You will make no sound!" Lambert snapped.

"Sound? You mean call for help? Why? I have no desire to be dead. I can work in prison, it does not matter. The Fuhrer wanted me to die. I would not die for him, why would I die to save this band of criminals? Let them rot!"

"Good," Lambert said. "We will go then. Now!"

Cranston looked at the tall Russian agent. Suddenly Lambert seemed to have no further interest in the destruction of

the plates or of the gang. Lambert was not even waiting to find Kolchov!

"What about Kolchov?" Cranston said sharply, his keen eyes in his impassive face watching the Russian.

"Later," Lambert said quickly. "We must get Grobut away."

"Grobut is only one engraver," Cranston said sharply again. "We want the entire gang!"

"Of course," Lambert snapped, "but first we must get Grobut safely from here. You swim, Grobut?"

"Of course," the ex-Nazi said, and his deep-set eyes studied Lambert. "So you know Kolchov, and you want me more than you want the gang? You are no policeman! Ah, I see it now. Of course! Kolchov warned us that you would come. Kolchov is a genius for a mere..."

"Quiet!" Lambert cried, broke in, stopped the German from speaking. "Be quiet! Not another word!"

But Cranston had heard what Wolfgang Grobut had said. Lambert wanted Grobut!! That was it! The reason the Russian agent had not worked with the Western police against the gang. The soviet Government wanted Wolfgang Grobut. Cranston stepped toward Lambert, his hand reaching for the automatic inside his coat. He stopped. The muzzle of the small Beretta was aimed at his heart. Lambert was no longer smiling. The tall, slender Russian was grim as death.

"So, you have guessed at last," Lambert said. "Yes, we want to destroy the gang, and we have, but we want Grobut more! He is a great engraver, he has made the best counterfeit money the world has ever seen. Such a man is more valuable than guns. Counterfeit money is a powerful weapon, Cranston, I regret what I must do, but I have my orders. We must have Grobut alive and with us! Too bad your friend The Shadow is not here, that would have made my work more difficult."

And the tall Russian agent laughed now. With a quick motion of his silenced pistol, Lambert indicated that Grobut was to walk toward the door that led to the after torpedo room. Backing away, Lambert moved toward the door with his deadly little pistol trained on both Grobut and Cranston at the same time. When the Russian reached the door he opened it and backed through, stepping carefully high over the watertight frame. He motioned for Grobut to step

through after him. The bulky silencer on the small Beretta was aimed straight at Cranston.

"Don't be a fool, Lambert, you can't get away! The police will have you within hours!"

"Within hours, Cranston, I will be safely at sea! And who will stop me before I reach my ship? That stupid fisherman friend of yours on shore? He thinks I am with you, and you will not tell him anything, you will be dead!"

Lambert's scarred finger tightened on the trigger of his Beretta. In that instant, Cranston lunged to his right with all the speed and power of his amazing muscular control. Lambert was left handed. The first sharp, spitting shot of the silenced Beretta missed Cranston by a hair as he lunged away. There was no second shot. The first bullet sang and whined as it struck the metal presses. As Lambert aimed to fire again, Cranston had moved behind the stocky figure of Wolfgang Grobut. Lambert could not risk hitting Grobut. The Russian swore and stepped to his right to shoot around Grobut. By then Cranston had reached the cover of a press and his own automatic was out. Lambert did not hesitate a second. The Russian reached out and slammed the door shut before Cranston could fire.

Cranston was on his feet and racing across the large press room to the door. Lambert had dogged it down tight. Cranston waited with his ear against the door. He heard the second door close along the corridor that led to the after torpedo room. He quickly began to open the door in front of him. Cranston had this first door almost open when the submarine exploded.

The blast flung Cranston to the steel deck.

The U-boat heaved like some snake in a giant convulsion.

Water began to pour into the large press room through a gaping hole in its port side.

A second explosion, and a third, rocked the U-boat. The explosions were from the forward section. Cranston struggled to his feet already knee deep in rushing water.

Forward, voices were shouting. Many voices shouting in agony and horror.

The shouts turned into screams. The horrible screams of drowning men. There was a banging and crashing forward that mingled with the helpless screams in a horrifying wall of terrified sound.

Cranston staggered through the rising water to the door.

He tore the door open and closed it behind him, dogging it down to make it watertight. There was little water in the after corridor. Cranston ran to the second door that led into the after torpedo room. He opened this door, dogged it down behind him, and turned to survey the torpedo room.

Jonathan Lambert lay on the deck.

Cranston stared for an instant at the Russian agent, then he crossed the deck to him quickly. Lambert lay on his back, his arms out, the Beretta lying beside him. Lambert's eyes bulged open. His face was contorted, twisted grotesquely. A tiny glass and metal pellet stuck into the Russian's neck. Jonathan Lambert was dead. The third victim of the deadly air gun.

Walter Grobut was not in the torpedo room.

Cranston looked up at the closed after hatch. Water was seeping all around the hatch. The hatch had been closed from the outside and was not dogged down and watertight. Far off the last faint screams were growing silent. The U-boat stopped moving. The deck of the torpedo room tilted at a sharp angle. Water was spurting around the watertight door between the torpedo room and the rest of the shattered U-boat. The submarine was old, it had been out of battle service for a long time. The explosions that had ripped its hull had loosened the frames of the watertight doors. Cranston looked at the water that spurted from all around the door into the torpedo room. The water spurted top and bottom. The corridor behind the door was filled to the top with water.

Cranston stood in the only unflooded compartment in the entire U-boat, and already the water was above his knees.

He looked up at the hatch. It had stopped leaking. The hatch was sealed down now, held shut by the pressure of the water above it. The U-boat rested on the bottom of the sea, and the hatch above could not be opened against the pressure of the water. Cranston looked at the water that was up to his waist now. He turned his eyes toward the torpedo tubes, but there were no tubes, they had been welded closed. The welds had sprung, and water seeped in from the tubes. For another long moment Cranston studied the entire room. There was no way out except the hatch above held sealed by the weight of water outside. And the water was now above Cranston's waist.

Lamont Cranston turned and walked straight to the door

between the torpedo room and the rest of the flooded U-boat. He pushed through the slowly rising water, taking slow, deep breaths of the remaining air. At the door he stood and opened the dogs. As he reached for the last dog, he flattened against the bulkhead as far from the door as he could get. He opened the last dog.

The door flew open and a wall of water poured into the torpedo room. Flat against the bulkhead, Cranston fought to hold his feet. The surge of water smashed against the far wall and flowed back. Cranston held his feet. In the next instant the compartment was filled to the ceiling with silent water. Beneath the surface Cranston swam upward to the hatch. At the hatch he pushed. The pressure equalized now that the compartment was flooded, the hatch opened. Cranston swam up and through and struck for the surface, his lungs feeding on the trapped air with his shallow breathing technique. He swam upward and broke out into the air. The submarine was down in less than forty feet of water. But it had been enough for all except Cranston.

Where he floated now on the surface there was nothing but the silence of the dark night. No one else swam in the murky water, and there were no bodies. Bits and pieces of the shattered U-boat bobbed on the surface, but there was nothing else and no sound anywhere.

On shore there were lights in all the houses on either side of the big house of Gideon Coffin. There were shouts, and people stood on the beach looking out to sea. From the sea itself, the running lights of boats were approaching. The explosions had been heard far and wide. But the people on shore could see nothing, and the boats would be too late.

Cranston swam grimly for shore.

18

A FEW MOMENTS later it was not Lamont Cranston who left the sea and glided silently across the beach, it was The Shadow.

The Shadow reached the line of bushes at the edge of the

open beach and stopped. His piercing gaze searched the bushes. He saw nothing. The black cloaked Avenger moved through the bushes. His eerie voice whispered in the night.

"Sulu? Sulu Calin!"

But there was no answer. Sulu Calin was not there. The Shadow searched the ground but found no signs of violence or any other clue to the whereabouts of the stocky lobsterman. Perhaps Sulu had gone for help as instructed, or perhaps they had captured the lobsterman. The Shadow might have one more crime to avenge!

His eyes burning, and yet as cold as steel, The Shadow moved through the night toward the big house that glowed faintly white in the dark night. The black-cloaked figure floated like a phantom hawk toward the house of Gideon Coffin.

The house was dark and silent on the seaward side. But the ears of The Shadow heard faint sounds far off on the other side. Grimly, the silent Avenger glided through the darkness toward the sounds on the other side of the big house. As he neared the single lighted window, a giant figure appeared at the corner of the house. The Shadow reached for a low branch of a tree and swung into the branches, his black shape vanishing into the deep shadows of the tree. The giant figure came on. It was the sadistic Ivan.

Moving alertly, Ivan came toward the tree in which The Shadow lurked like a black eagle. The giant carried his Sten gun and looked every way as he circled the white house. A moment later Ivan passed beneath the tree where The Shadow waited. With his mocking laugh echoing low in the night, The Shadow struck. His black cloak flying out, he dropped from the tree like a bird of prey striking down at its quarry. Ivan staggered, the Sten gun flying away in the darkness. The Shadow leaped away and circled unseen. His chilling voice slashed at the sadistic giant.

"Do you want to see my face now, Ivan!"

Ivan stared, snarled. "Where? Who?"

The chilling face of The Shadow seemed to emerge from the night bathed in a red glow. His cloak faded away into the dark as if it never ended.

"You! No! You're dead! I saw you go down!" Ivan cried in terror and disbelief.

"Then I am a ghost, Ivan! Look at my face now! Look at the eyes you love to see die! Listen to me beg, Ivan!"

Ivan shivered in fear, his giant body shaking in the warm night. Then, the fear now so great his mind could not stand

it, the giant lurched toward the mocking Shadow. Ivan lunged, his murderous fingers stretched out, reaching to claw the unseen phantom that mocked him.

The Shadow glided aside at the last instant. Ivan staggered past. The Shadow brought down the edge of his hand across the neck of the lunging giant. There was a sickening snap, and Ivan crashed to the ground, his neck broken by the single blow. Ivan lay still. The giant was dead.

Without a glance backward, The Shadow moved on toward the house. Through the window of the same office-type room in which he had earlier seen Hubert Adrian and Turhan Kemel, he now saw Adrian, Avis Adrian, Penelope Drake, and the bearded engraver, Wolfgang Grobut. Hubert Adrian and his tall, blonde wife were frantically packing stacks of money into suitcases. The Drake girl was burning papers in the fireplace. Wolfgang Grobut sat alone in a far corner almost out of the light of the single desk lamp. The flames of the burning papers cast a macabre flickering light across all their faces. Turhan Kemel was not in sight. The Shadow searched the room for Kemel, but in the twisting light from the fireplace he could not see the Turk in the room. The next instant the black-cloaked Avenger was gone from the window.

In the dim room, lighted by the feeble desk lamp and by the undulating light and dark of the flames from the fireplace, Hubert Adrian packed furiously, his eyes glancing from time to time at the open door into the dark hallway. Avis Adrian helped her husband nervously, her fingers fumbling on the stacks of crisp American money. Penelope Drake burned the papers in the fireplace one by one, placing each single paper carefully into the flames, stirring the ashes after each burned document. When she had a ledger or book to burn, she tore out each page singly to burn it. She worked quickly and efficiently, the least nervous person in the room with the exception of the bearded Wolfgang Grobut. The ex-Nazi sat silently watching, taking no part in the activities, a thin smile playing across his full lips.

Hubert Adrian glanced again at the open door into the darkened hallway. He returned to his packing—and then he froze. Slowly Adrian looked again at the doorway. It was pitch black, as it had been for the last hour, but it was not empty. The blackness moved. A thick, heavy shape of blackness that seemed to fill the doorway and move into the room with the flickering light of the flames. Adrian dropped the

money in his hand and clawed toward a pistol on the desk.

"Do not try, Hubert Adrian!"

Hubert Adrian stopped. He turned to look toward the door. The Shadow seemed to grow inside the room, his burning eyes looking from face to face as they all turned to stare. His hawk nose jutted like a razor above the high collar of his black cloak. The fire-opal girasol cast a red glow across his face and hands.

Penelope Drake had stood up and turned from the fireplace where the flickering flames now consumed a thick book she had had in her hands and had laid on the flame all at once when The Shadow appeared.

"Who . . . ?" the Drake girl began.

"The other one," Hubert Adrian said. "The one in black!"

Avis Adrian cried out, "But he's dead! You told me you killed him!"

"I did! I saw him go under. We threw Cranston overboard all tied and chained! No one could have survived that. He never came up. Ivan watched for ten minutes. Ivan! Ivan!"

The elegant gallery owner shouted in panic for his giant killer.

The laugh of The Shadow slashed through the dim room like a chilling blast of terror.

"Do not call for your killer, Hubert Adrian, he will not hear you!" The Shadow mocked.

The Drake girl stood before the fire. "You threw Cranston overboard, Adrian, not this one."

"But Cranston and this man are the same! We unmasked this one. It was Cranston! I saw it!"

"You fool," Avis Adrian swore harshly, "you bungler!"

Wolfgang Grobut had not moved a muscle. Now the short, bearded ex-Nazi narrowed his deep-set eyes as he looked at the towering figure of The Shadow that seemed to blend into the shadows of the flickering room. Grobut had nerves of steel, and sucked slowly on his empty pipe as he looked at The Shadow.

"What is this creature? Are you frightened by child's pranks? The great Kolchov!" Wolfgang Grobut sneered.

The Shadow moved closer to the sneering German. His fiery eyes bored into the bearded ex-Nazi.

"You will not escape your punishment this time, Wolfgang Grobut. None of you will escape! You think you are an artist, Wolfgang Grobut, but you are not. An artist must have morality, and you have no morality! You have no soul, Wolf-

gang Grobut, and you will be punished for your crimes!"

The sneer vanished from the small German's face. His full lips paled in anger. His steely control was gone. He shouted.

"I am an artist! A great artist! My technique is unmatched! *Schwein! Galgenhund!* I will show you..."

"Stop!" The Shadow commanded.

Wolfgang Grobut had half-risen from his chair in fury. The small ex-Nazi had his hand in his pocket, reaching for a pistol that showed clearly inside the pocket. For a second he remained that way, a statue half out of his chair, his hand in his pocket. The Shadow loomed close above him, the great black figure seeming to envelope the small German, flow over and through him. Then Grobut took his hand from his pocket and slowly sat back in his chair, his face expressionless, vacant, unmoving.

The Shadow laughed.

"What do you want here?" The Drake girl said from where she still stood before the dying fire.

"Justice and the end of evil, Penelope Drake!" The Shadow intoned harshly. "The weed of crime bears bitter fruit, and now it is ended."

The Drake girl blinked. "What do you mean?"

"Do not pretend, Penelope Drake," The Shadow said. "It was you who brought Hubert Adrian and the rest to this house. You used your old uncle for their schemes."

Hubert Adrian protested. "But we have done nothing!"

The eyes of The Shadow burned into the elegant gallery owner, looked fiercely at the others, the women.

"Fools, do you think I do not know? I know that Grobut and Kitt were two of your engravers. I know the counterfeit was made on the submarine. I know the paper was shipped to The Coffin Press. I know the counterfeit was shipped inside the hollow boards of your Adrian Gallery boxes! And I know that you killed Morris Kitt, and the Russian agents who called themselves Jonathan Lambert and Dimitri!"

Hubert Adrian paled and caught hold of the edge of the desk beside him. Avis Adrian began to sob. The Drake girl stared at Adrian. Then Penelope Drake cried out in horror.

"Oh no! I... I... knew about the money, yes, but... not murder! Mr. Adrian, how horrible! Death is so horrible. Would you want to die? Your wife? Would you want her to die?" Penelope Drake cried

Hubert Adrian was as pale as chalk in the dim light of the

room that still flickered macabre and grotesque in the dying flames of the fire.

"I..." the shaken gallery owner began.

The Shadow glided closer to Adrian. "You killed Morris Kitt because he could not resist stealing those statues, and that endangered the gang. You knew he could be traced to you, and you were afraid he would talk if caught! You saw that I had him captured, so you killed him."

"I... Yes, yes, I killed him. I saw that you had him, and I..." Adrian stopped, blinked, said, "No, I saw that you had him, but I would have killed him anyway, he was a fool! He would not stop that stupid stealing of worthless statues! He thought he had us fooled. He thought we did not know."

Avis Adrian cried out. "No, Hubert! You..."

Adrian snarled at his wife. "You brought Kitt to us! It was you! You vouched for him, said we could use another engraver, told us he could not be traced! You fool!"

Penelope Drake sighed. "It is all over now, Avis. Perhaps it is better that Hubert tell them all. I think it will help."

Avis Adrian turned her ashen face toward the Drake girl who looked at her pityingly. Avis stared at the assistant. The face of the tall, blonde woman was a mask of fear. The Drake girl smiled reassuringly.

The Shadow spoke again to Hubert Adrian. "You confess then, Hubert Adrian? You killed Morris Kitt? And you killed the Russian Dimitri in the cellar of the gallery. You killed Jonathan Lambert on the submarine just now? And you ordered my death there on the PT-boat?"

"Yes," Hubert Adrian said.

"How did you kill them, Hubert Adrian?"

"With the air gun! Yes, I killed them with the air gun. It is deadly, instantaneous. There is no escape once the poison is inside the skin," Adrian said, muttered, almost half talking now to himself.

The Shadow towered black in the dim room, the fire all but out now. The Avenger looked at the broken Hubert Adrian. Then he turned his pitiless gaze on the ashen face of the tall, blonde Avis Adrian. Penelope Drake stepped away from the fireplace toward The Shadow. She still carried a sheaf of documents in her small hand, holding them with both hands before her now.

"Do you have to go on, whoever you are? Hasn't it gone far enough? We admit our guilt, isn't that the end?" Penelope

Drake said. "I know my guilt. What I have done to my poor old and helpless uncle. Bring on your police, they must be waiting."

The pretty girl had removed her glasses now. She stood there looking sad and alone, her beautiful body slumped in dejection, perhaps in remorse, as The Shadow looked at her.

"The police will arrive, Penelope Drake," The Shadow said. He looked again at Hubert Adrian. "Where is Turhan Kemel? Have you killed Kemel, too?"

"Kemel?" Adrian said.

"Yes! He was here earlier. He was seen."

"The Turk only came to beg Mr. Adrian to reopen his show," Penelope Drake said.

"Then he is not one of you?" The Shadow demanded.

"No," Penelope Drake said.

Avis Adrian burst out, "He has confessed! Isn't that enough for you now? What more do you want!"

The Shadow laughed. The eerie, chilling laugh echoed through the great, silent house, its weird tones hanging in the air.

"Enough? Perhaps, Avis Adrian, but only The Shadow knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men," the shrouded Avenger intoned.

His blazing eyes suddenly flared up as he turned once more to look at the cowering Hubert Adrian.

"So you killed them all, Hubert Adrian? Why did you kill the Russians Dimitri and Lambert?"

"Why? Because they were after us, yes! They . . . they recognized me."

"Then you are the leader?"

"Yes."

"You are Kolchov?"

"Yes, Kolchov," Adrian said.

The laugh of The Shadow echoed again through the house. "No, Hubert Adrian, you are *not* Kolchov!"

In the dim room, the fire out now and the single light on the desk too weak to reach into the darker parts of the room, there was a long silence. Avis Adrian covered her mouth as if to stifle a scream. Penelope Drake stood rigid, unmoving as if paralyzed by some sudden stroke. Hubert Adrian turned the color of dirty grey clay, his hand shaking violently. Only Wolfgang Grobut, emerging now from the trance induced by The Shadow, could speak. Grobut moved, heard the last words of The Shadow.

"Kolchov! Yes, a genius. Deadly, very deadly, but we work together, *hein?*" the bearded ex-Nazi muttered.

The Shadow motioned a long, powerful finger toward the muttering German. His fiery eyes fixed Hubert Adrian with a withering stare.

"Kolchov is deadly, cold, ruthless," The Shadow said. "Kitt feared Kolchov. You all fear Kolchov. You are not deadly or ruthless, Hubert Adrian. You are a tool! You do not give orders, you take them! In your office you talked to Kolchov. You did not kill me because you had to wait for orders from your leader, and Kolchov is your leader. You are taking orders now! You confessed only because Kolchov ordered you to confess, threatened you here in this room!"

The Shadow turned his avenging face toward the silent and rigid form of the beautiful girl who moved not a hair or muscle in her fine body as The Shadow faced her.

"Do you think I am such a fool, Penelope Drake, that I do not know when a threat is being uttered," The Shadow demanded. "Did you think you could fool me so simply with thinly veiled warnings of what would happen to Adrian and his wife if they exposed you?"

The girl who had so carefully hidden her beauty behind the glasses, clothes, and manner of a scholarly type said nothing.

"You, Penelope Drake," The Shadow intoned. "You are the former Smersh agent *Kolchov!*"

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"YOU ARE the leader of this gang and the killer of Morris Kitt and all the others!"

The Shadow waited as he watched the girl. For a long minute she stared straight into his eyes.

Then Penelope Drake laughed at The Shadow.

"Don't be ridiculous!" Penelope Drake snapped.

In the room the others sat without moving. Hubert Adrian seemed trapped between terror and a faint hope. Avis Adrian watched her husband, her hand trembling. Wolfgang Grobut seemed nervous for the first time. The ex-Nazi had lost his

cold sneer. He looked now like no more than an old man who has lost his last hope.

"I admit I am in the gang, yes, but I am not Kolchov!" Penelope Drake said. "Who told you I was Kolchov?"

"Jonathan Lambert told me," The Shadow said softly in the dim and quiet room of the big old house.

"Lambert? But Lambert never saw me!" Penelope Drake cried.

"No," The Shadow said, "Lambert never saw you, and that was how he told me! There were many small clues. The way they all looked at you at the gallery when you told me about Morris Kitt. You were telling more than they liked, but you were the boss. They were very nervous, but they did not stop you.

"Adrian never gave you a real order, when I thought about it. And it was you who had the connection up here to use this house as a base. All this was minor until Lambert told me that he knew you *on sight*, and yet I knew he had not yet found you, he had not found *Kolchov*! He was sure Kolchov had joined with Wolfgang Grobut to start the ring of counterfeiters, but he had not yet *seen* Kolchov.

"Even that did not make me realize immediately. But there were strange words he used. He said Kolchov was as deadly as a black widow spider—a female! When I called Kolchov 'him,' Lambert was startled, hesitated, and then decided not to tell me that Kolchov was a woman. Lambert's leader mocked Lambert and Dimitri for letting Kolchov outwit them and kill them. The words he used were, 'What men I have to let Kolchov outwit and kill them!' You see? What *men* I have. Again, he was mocking them for being beaten by a *woman*.

"Grobut almost let it out in the submarine. He said Kolchov was a genius for a mere . . . And Lambert stopped him. Grobut was about to say 'for a mere woman.' His Nazi superiority would make him think that way. Finally, I remember those boxes in the coal room of the cellar at the Adrian Gallery. *There were two boxes*.

"The killer of Morris Kitt had gone through that manhole into the cellar. The killer had almost certainly come out of it to go to the Pauli Gallery to kill Kitt. The escape route was prepared. But there were two boxes, and *both* had been used. Neither Lambert nor I had needed more than one to reach the manhole. But a short woman would have needed two! And there were two boxes."

Penelope Drake sneered at The Shadow. The scholarly manner was all gone now. The girl, woman, stood taller and the beauty of her lithe body flaunted itself at The Shadow. The Avenger watched her closely. It was obvious that Penelope Drake had an amazing muscular control, exceptional for a woman. Enough control over her body to give her the ability to seem to change total posture, attitude, general shape, and effect of appearance. Now she was displaying its hard and sinuous beauty that had been hidden so well under the soft and scholarly pose of the gallery assistant.

"All pure inference except for the two boxes," Penelope Drake said coldly. "And the two boxes could mean a short man. Grobut is short. Kemel is short!"

"Grobut is German. Kemel is Turkish," The Shadow said bluntly. "Kolchov must be from an English-speaking country. Lambert and Dimitri knew Kolchov, they were of the English Section of the Soviet Secret Service. Kolchov was known to almost no one. Therefore the only way Dimitri and Lambert could have known Kolchov on sight was that they had worked together! Kolchov, too, had to have been of the English Section, the Soviets are not fools, they do not let one agent know another unless absolutely unavoidable."

Penelope Drake now smiled. The slender and perfect body was suddenly soft again, warm.

"You are very clever, whoever you are," she said. "But, really, nothing you have is proof. Perhaps a woman, perhaps a short man. All of us here speak English. How can you say Kolchov is me? Why not Adrian, or Grobut, or Avis Adrian, or Kemel?"

"Because they were all seen by Lambert," The Shadow said quietly now. "*Only you were never seen by Lambert.* When I guessed that Kolchov was a woman, I turned my mind back, and I saw it all. The first time Lambert entered the Adrian Gallery, the night of Kitt's murder, you went upstairs as he came in. The second time, the night Dimitri was killed, you did not come down the stairs until after Lambert had gone. At no time did I see you where Lambert could see you! You were the only member of the gang that Lambert did not see. He saw Gideon Coffin here, and he knew Grobut on sight."

"You are mistaken," Penelope Drake said. "You do not remember right. I was there when Lambert was there."

"No! The Shadow has total recall, Penelope Drake! My

mind never forgets what it has seen and I can bring it back at any time like a file of microfilm! It is a secret I learned from the great Chen T'a Tze himself!"

When the next voice suddenly broke the silence of the dim room, The Shadow did not recognize it at first. The voice was low, controlled, the fear all gone out of it. It was the voice of Hubert Adrian. The elegant gallery owner was staring at Penelope Drake.

"Yes," Hubert Adrian said. "Lambert never saw her. We had our orders. Someone always watched for Lambert or Dimitri. She was very afraid of them."

"Be silent, you fool!"

For the third time Penelope Drake changed. Now her body was all muscle, almost masculine. And her voice changed with her body. The voice was sharp, low, military. It was the voice of a trained soldier. A merciless and ruthless soldier.

"No!" Hubert Adrian cried. "It is over. You cannot harm me or Avis now. I know the powers of this man in black! You are finished, *Kolchov*! I told you not to kill Morris Kitt!"

Penelope Drake, code-named *Kolchov*, began to nod now. Her pretty head moved up and down in a motion that said she had, really, always known that this moment would come. The Shadow watched her closely. She stood beaten. Tall and straight like a soldier in defeat. The Shadow did not trust her, his fiery eyes never moved from her face. She had killed three men. Three men who knew how to take care of themselves, and two of whom were highly trained experts in the dark world of international terror and espionage. They had been expert, skilled, but she had been more expert, more skilled. So he watched her. It was the eyes that always signaled the move, the attempt to escape, the imminent attack. The Shadow watched her eyes. He was so intent on her face he did not see the old man come into the room.

Penelope Drake's eyes flicked for a second toward the old man. Gideon Coffin stood there just inside the door and looked at his grandniece. The old man's voice was tired, weary.

"So she is caught," Gideon Coffin said. "I knew. I could not do it, but I knew it would happen. It was her mother. I warned my nephew, but he married the woman anyway. I think the mother, too, was a Communist spy. I had no

proof, but I knew. I cut off my nephew, but he died, and the woman died, and I could not deny the girl. It was a long time before I guessed that she had thrown in her lot with them!"

The old man sighed, smiled. "She could not even be loyal to them, could she. Animal, only an evil animal. Money tempted her and she betrayed the Communists too. An animal without morality or pity or pride or shame! That poor Kitt, he was only a fool. He imagined himself an artist, a collector of art. He was not really a bad person, but she had to kill him. She likes to kill. She is no better than that monster Ivan, but she has a brain, and that makes her..."

The whole time the old man was talking, The Shadow never let his piercing eyes wander for a second from the face of Penelope Drake. The face of the beaten soldier who stood proud and undaunted in the face of her captors. It was a mistake.

The Shadow saw nothing at all in her eyes. Not a muscle or nerve twitched in her face. Her hands holding the documents in front of her simply moved apart slowly, so slowly no one saw until they fell, suddenly, to the floor. The air gun was in her right hand. It had been hidden beneath the documents the whole time The Shadow had been in the room. Not once had she given that fact away, but she had been alert and ready from the instant The Shadow had appeared.

The documents fell to the floor and she shot. The sharp spit of air barely sounded in the dim room.

Gideon Coffin never finished his sentence. The old man clutched his neck as if a bee had stung him. Then he fell dead.

The air gun spat again. A sharp rush of wind.

Hubert Adrian crashed against the desk and slid to the floor.

The Shadow leaped toward her.

"Stop!" The Shadow commanded.

Penelope Drake stopped, blinked once, stepped backward one step to the wall, and vanished.

The Shadow leaped across the dim room to the wall. There was no sign of the secret door through which Penelope Drake, the turncoat Soviet agent *Kolchov*, had vanished. The Avenger whirled. Avis Adrian bent over the body of her husband.

"Quick! How does it work?" The Shadow demanded.

"I . . . I don't know. He knew," Avis Adrian said pointing to the dead Gideon Coffin.

"She can't get far! She must have an escape planned!" The Shadow said harshly.

Walter Grobut spoke. The ex-Nazi was now no more than a shivering old man. Grobut stared at the dead Gideon Coffin and the horribly twisted face of Hubert Adrian.

"The boat," Grobut said, his voice shaking. "The PT-boat, it is hidden in a secret boathouse in the harbor. It was our escape. Catch her! She is insane. The boathouse is down at the water on the harbor side, it looks like only a small sand dune. There is a red flag on top!"

The Shadow turned and glided like a great bird from the room. In the hall he moved swiftly toward the front door. He opened the door—and closed it without going out. In the hall he stood and listened. For a long instant he stopped breathing.

Faint, very faint, his super-ears heard the sound.

Far off and above where he stood, only The Shadow could have heard the soft, light step far above. His grim face smiled alone in the dark hall. It was as he had expected. Penelope Drake, *Kolchov*, would have been too clever to use the prepared escape this time. She would leave nothing to chance, trust in no element of luck, expect no errors on the part of her enemies. It would have been an error on the part of The Shadow to not question Wolfgang Grobut immediately—and *Kolchov* would know that.

The faint sound came again.

On the third floor. Almost directly above where The Shadow stood in the dark behind the front door. Trained and incredibly clever, *Kolchov*. Leave nothing to chance. Expect no errors and hope for no luck to give her time. A second escape—and only The Shadow could have heard the faint sounds that came from above *after* he had opened and closed the front door. Nothing left to chance, only after the door had opened and closed had *Kolchov* moved far above!

Now there was no more sound from above.

The Shadow turned from the door at once and retraced his silent path along the hall. At the stairs he moved up to the second floor. His ears were delicately alert, keyed to their highest pitch, and his piercing eyes searched the dark as he climbed in silence on his slippered feet.

On the third floor The Shadow stopped to listen again. He heard nothing. His face set in its grim and avenging smile, he

moved along the third floor hall until he came to the front room above where the door was downstairs. He entered noiselessly and stood alone in the dark, his black garbed figure invisible in the shadows of the room.

His eyes, with their dark vision, saw that he was in a simple bedroom. There was a tall four-poster bed, chairs, a couch, two chests of drawers, and a woman's dressing table. His eyes saw nothing else. The room was bare and untouched.

But his ears, keyed to their keenest pitch, *heard* something else. His eyes burned with avenging fire.

He heard the faint, soft sound of human breathing.

The laugh of The Shadow rose chilling in the small room.

"Kolchov! No one can escape The Shadow!"

There was no answer, no movement.

"I know you are there!" The Shadow intoned. "You cannot escape the mind of The Shadow! Come out with your hands up!"

Nothing moved.

In the room the power of the mind of The Shadow reached out, probed the darkness. His eyes glowed in the night. The blood-red fire-opal girasol blazed with its inner light. The Avenger seemed to grow larger, spread, expand, until his black-garbed shape filled the whole room.

The wall opened.

There was a faint click and the wall to the right of The Shadow opened suddenly.

She stood there. The air gun was in her hand and aimed at The Shadow. She made no sound. She did not speak. Her eyes blinked once, twice. Her hand trembled on the air gun. The Shadow's eyes burned through her.

The air gun fell from her hand.

The Shadow stepped toward her, moved through the dark to her.

She pitched forward to the floor and lay still.

The Shadow glided across the dark room to stand over her. She did not move, and she did not breathe. The Avenger bent down. He smelled the odor of bitter almonds. In her small, even teeth he saw the few remains of the cyanide capsule.

The black cloaked Avenger stood up and looked down at her. She had not spoken once, not a word or sound. The cold, ruthless soldier to the end. She had died as she had lived, and her secrets, and her reasons for deserting her

country to become a Smersh agent, and her reasons for betraying the Soviet for crime, had died with her. In a way she could be admired, respected. She had lived by her code and had not flinched at the end. Unable to resist the power of The Shadow any longer, she had taken her final escape. She had lived by violence and died by violence. Without a word or sound. Penelope Drake, alias *Kolchov*, was dead.

The Shadow felt no pity for her. She had been evil, a merciless killer, and justice had been done. And in the old house the chilling laugh of The Shadow echoed all down the dark and empty halls.

The sun had risen and was halfway down the sky again when Ralston, Detective Joe Cardona, Margo and Lamont Cranston rode in the taxi toward the Martha's Vineyard airport. Cranston sat with his eyes hooded in his impassive face, his pretty dark-haired secretary herself again beside him. Ralston, the T-Man, was explaining the whole case.

"We were with Margo here when that Sulu Calin came running for us with his story of the submarine blowing up with you in it, Cranston. You were damned lucky they took you off first."

The final laugh of The Shadow had barely faded away in the big house the night before when Margo, Sulu Calin, Ralston, and Joe Cardona had arrived on the run at the house with the entire local police force. They had found Lamont Cranston bound in the cellar. They had found Avis Adrian still bending over the twisted body of Hubert Adrian. Wolfgang Grobut, recovered from his fright, had tried to run, but had been caught in Vineyard Haven attempting to steal a boat to reach the mainland. Turhan Kemel had been found bound and gagged in the hidden PT-boat.

"Kemel really just came up to ask for his show to reopen," Ralston the Treasury man said. "He wasn't in the gang. That Wolfgang Grobut refuses to talk, but it doesn't matter. We've got him cold for counterfeiting, and Avis Adrian has told us the whole thing. The submarine was the printing plant all right. They were all dead in the sub. The Adrian woman says the sub was blown up by the Drake woman herself.

"She was the leader, Penelope Drake, and when she saw you and Lambert on the sub she knew the game was up and blew the sub up herself with charges placed for just such an emergency. She was a real killer type, didn't mind killing all her own people. Lambert was a Russian agent, we think, but

the divers who brought him up found no identification at all, not even his real name."

Cranston sighed. "We never will know his real name. He'll go to a nameless grave, that is part of the game they play."

"I guess so," Ralston agreed. "Anyway, it was the Drake girl's plan all along. She found Grobut, she bought the sub, she hired other engravers and set up the plant, she used Coffin's house for a headquarters, and she brought Adrian and his gallery into the gang. She killed them all, even poor old Gideon Coffin. Then she killed herself. She was all alone in that room, I don't know what made her kill herself."

"Perhaps she was frightened by shadows," Margo said softly.

Ralston stared at Margo. "Funny you said that. The Adrian woman keeps babbling about a black giant, a black shadow. We found a giant of a man in the grounds with his neck broken, but we can't figure who did that. We heard a funny kind of sound, like a laugh, when we arrived, and the Adrian woman keeps talking about a wierd laugh. Someone, or something, laughed and broke the neck of that giant, but there just wasn't anyone else around."

"Just the shadows," Margo said.

"Shadows don't break necks and laugh," Ralston said.

"You never know, Ralston," Lamont Cranston said softly. "There are more things in the shadows than any of us know."

Ralston snorted then, and the Treasury man sat back in the taxi as they approached the airport. Margo Lane smiled at the impassive figure of Lamont Cranston. The eyes of the wealthy socialite flashed once with the fire of The Shadow, and then became quiet and impassive—the way they would be until The Shadow was called again.

THE END

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